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THE
Spiritual Director

~~by~~

~~by the Rev. Father~~

Translated out of French.



Printed in the Year 1703.



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T*HIS Work was to have appeared under the Title of The Portable Director : But upon second Thoughts, I judged this which it now bears to agree better with the Subjects whereon it treats.*

I have divided it into two Parts : The first explains the Duties of a Christian, considered as a Christian, and treats of the ordinary and common Practices of Piety among such as are desirous to be saved. I speak therein largely of the Necessity and Method of Prayer. There the Reader will see how profitable it is to hear Mass every Day, when he can, and with what Spirit he ought to assist at it. What regards Confession, Communion, and the Rules which ought therein to be observed, is examined at length, and may pass for a particular Treatise on so important a Matter. I there discourse concerning Temptations, and of

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Cases where they may prove a Hindrance to frequent Communion. The Necessity of Repentance is proved from Scripture, from the Fathers, and from Reasons drawn from the very Foundation of Christian Religion: and I set down as well the Penance required of the most Just, as that which God exacts from Sinners. The Devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and to the rest of the Saints, is established upon the Principles of Catholick Doctrine, and Confined within its due Limits.

Besides these Common Exercises, I propose some particular, which I think very profitable, as the Meditation of Death and Judgement; The Means to acquire the Knowledge of ones self, being of all Sciences the most useful; The Retreat of one Day every Month; The Meditation of our Saviour's Passion every Friday Night, and some others. I speak also, in this first Part, of Lawful Pleasures, upon which I lay down Rules drawn from the Gospel and the Doctrine of the Saints.

In the second Part of this Book, I consider the Christian, as engaged in some of those general Conditions which compose

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pose the Common-Wealth, and I let him see the several Duties annexed to those different States ; so that the Rich and the Poor, the Great and little, Masters and Servants, will find here, in a short View, all that the Scripture and Fathers have said concerning their Obligations.

Then I descend to particular States, in which the Christian may be engaged by his own choice, as Celibacy, Marriage, Priesthood, Religion. I counsel not those who are not called to Priesthood, nor to a Religious Life, to make a Vow of perpetual Continence. Experience shews the Inconvenience of such Engagements ; when one may without any Hazard make a limited Vow, which may be renewed from time to time. I have dwelt somewhat long on my Discourse of Virginity, because it is a State much more holy and sweet than that of Marriage. I find in the holy Fathers admirable Elogiums on this excellent Vertue, and I thought an Abridgement of them might not be ungrateful to the Reader.

I have said nothing of Priesthood, and very little of the Religious State, this Work not being designed for such as are engaged therein. I conclude this Work

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with shewing the Disposition wherein all Christians, of what State soever, ought to pass their Lives, viz. in lamenting with Sighs our miserable Exile, and in the Love and Desire of our Cælestial Country, which ought always to possess our Hearts.

I may affirm, that I have said nothing of my own in this Book; all is taken from the Scripture, the Fathers, and the best Modern Authors. I often set down their own Words, sometimes I abridge them, but am always careful to preserve the Sense.



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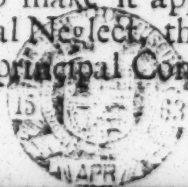
*Of the small Number of good
Directors.*

THE Title alone of this *Book* is sufficient to make known the Design of it. It was undertaken only for those who have no Director. To such it is addressed, and not to those who have, or easily may have one. I have not the least Thought of hindering the Faithful from having Recourte in their Difficulties and Temptations to their Pastors, and seeking all the Spiritual Helps they stand in need of. I know
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The Spiritual Director.

this is the ordinary, natural and lawful way, which *Jesus Christ* has established in his Church, for the Conduct of Souls. I know he said to the Apostles, and in them to all Pastors; *I send you as my Father hath sent me: Go therefore, teach all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you.* It was to them he said, *He that hears you, hears me: he that despises you, despises me,* Luke 10. 16. and one of the Commendations he gives his Sheep, is, That they hear his Voice, and that they know him. I respect that Sacred Order which our Saviour has established; I hold it inviolable, and every one who can follow it, ought not to depart from it. I look upon as a great Disorder, the Liberty many Catholicks take in governing themselves in the Great Affair of their Salvation, without so much as asking the Counsel or Advice of any one; and who make it appear, by such a criminal Neglect, that either it is not their principal Concern, or

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they are full of that Presumption which the Holy Ghost condemned, when he said, *Be not Wise in your own Conceit, and trust not to your own Lights.*

These Souls, whether negligent or presumptuous, are the more inexcusable, because there are not wanting, through the whole Christian World, Curates or other Ecclesiastical Persons, whom they may consult. Those who cannot Read, have hardly any other Means to instruct themselves; and the Faithful in general cannot do better than in their Difficulties to address themselves to the Pastors of the Church. *The Lips of the Priest, says the Scripture, keep Knowledge, and they shall ask of him the Explication of the Law, Mal. 2.7.*

But as it would be difficult for many Curates to undertake the particular Direction of all their Parishioners, one is sometimes under a necessity of seeking other Directors: it may happen also, that those who excel in the Conduct of Souls, are so much employed, that many under

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then

4 *The Spiritual Director.*

their Care profit very little on that account.

If a good Director be that wise Counsellor which the *Ecclesiasticus* bids us choose amongst a Thousand, *Eccl.* 6. 6. as the Holy Priest *Avila* explains it; if we are to seek him amongst Ten Thousand, according to the Opinion of *St. Francis de Sales*, who sees not the Number of good Directors to be so small, that very many must be destitute, and constrained to seek elsewhere for their necessary Instruction? 'Tis on this account doubtless, that Providence has afforded us so many good Books, to supply, in some measure, the want of Directors, as it has created in some very Wise Persons a desire of having one which should treat more expressly and fully of the Conduct those ought to follow, who want the Help of Directors. I have applied my self to this Work for some considerable time, and here are the Directions, I have judged most proper for such Persons.

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C H A P. II.

How to profit by Instructions received by Word of Mouth, and by those we find in good Books.

MY first Advice then regards those who here before have had a Director : for there are few Persons of any Piety, who in the beginning of their Conversion, have not consulted some one, to learn the Means of returning to God by a sincere Repentance. They who have had the Happiness to live some time under the Conduct of a good and able Man, need only continue to observe the Rules which he has prescribed them : they ought in the time of Plenty to lay up a Holy Provision against a time of Scarcity, imitating the Wisdom of the Blessed Virgin, of whom it is said she laid up in her Heart, and repassed in her Mind all the Words of her Son. For as the Truths of the Gospel are unchangeable, what ought to be done at the beginning

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of ones Conversion, the same ought to be done always; and there needs but the Knowledge how to apply general Principles to particular Occasions, to have an excellent Rule of Conduct. The Primitive Christians had no other: for there were very few Directors in their Days. The Apostles who were obliged to Preach the Gospel to all Nations, made no longer Stay in each Town than was needful, to form a Church; and no sooner was that effected, but they went on to plant another. As Idolatry was destroyed in one City or Country, they Marched on to Attack it in another. 'Tis true, they did leave some Priests in the great Churches, to cultivate these new Plants, and to finish their Work: but, besides that they left too few to undertake the particular Care and Charge of each new Convert, they likewise had in Charge the Performance of several other Functions. So that all they could do to instruct their Fold, was, to Preach often in publick, and every one of the Faithful

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ful in particular was to be content with these common Instructions.

Nevertheless, there is nothing so Holy as the Lives of these Primitive Christians: they had not half so much said to 'em in particular as we have now, but they took care, when they heard a Sermon, or could obtain any particular Instructions from their Pastors, to lay up those wholesome Truths in their Hearts: they joined with these Instructions the Reading of the Scriptures, and above all, put in Practice what they knew; and by that means advanced apace in the ways of Holiness. Let us do the same. If we meet a Man of God, a true Prophet, a good Priest, a good Religious, let us ask him concerning all our Difficulties, let us lock up all his Answers in our Hearts, let us not fail to put his Counsels in Practice as often as occasions offer. 'Tis incredible how much Good we should receive by rightly putting this Maxime in Use, and how much Time we might save our Directors, and Trouble to our selves, if we would but call to mind, when Difficulties

B 4 arise,

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arise, the Instructions and Rules they have already given us on the like occasions.

They who have not had the Happiness and Advantage of being bred under the Conduct of a Wise Director, ought to supply this Defect by a great and diligent Application to Read and Meditate the Word of God, and other Books of Piety, now every where extant: amongst which, I esteem these most useful. After the *New Testament*, which is the first and most excellent of all Books, The *Office of the Church*, The *following of Christ*, The *Psalms of David*, The *Works of Grenade*, and especially his *Guide to Sinners*, and *Roderiguez*: those who can have more, may add the *Old Testament*, the *Moral Homilies upon the Gospels* for the Sundays and Feasts throughout the Year, the *Moral Essays*, and other such like Books. For if there is not a Workman but will furnish himself with Tools, if there is not a Traveller but will inform himself of the Roads he is to pass, if there is not a General of an Army who will not study

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study well the Map of a Country where he is to make War ; then methinks there is not a Christian who ought not to furnish himself with good Books, since in them he will learn the Roads of a Christian Life, the Dangers there are upon the Earth, and the Means to escape them.

But in Reading the *Scripture*, he must take care not to dwell upon difficult Texts, and have always before his Eyes this Advice of the Wise Man : *Seek not things higher than thy self, and search not things stronger than thy Ability ; but the things that God hath commanded thee, think on them always*, Eccl. 3. 22. *Fear God, and keep his Commandments ; for this is every Man's Duty*, Eccl. 12. 13.

The Historical Books of *Scripture*, and those which treat of Morality, may be Read by all sorts of People : the others require more Light, Spirit, Faith and Submission, because they are full of Mysteries ; and he that would penetrate them, is oftentimes dazzled, Prov. 25. 27. And this made St. Peter say, *That in the Epistles of St. Paul, as well as the rest of the Scrip-*

tures,

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tures, are certain things hard to be understood, which the Unlearned and Unstable deprave to their own Perdition, 2 Pet. 3. Adore then those difficult places, without being solicitous to penetrate them. Go on to the clear, simple, familiar Instructions, which lead to Meekness, Humility, Patience, Charity, and all other Vertues. Leave the rest to the Learned. Provided you be Holy, it sufficeth; the whole Scripture preaches nothing but Sanctity.

As the Prophets and Apostles, who left it us, were inspired by the Holy

Greg. ad Leand. Ghost, it is composed in such a manner as to instruct the most Simple,

and nourish the most

Weak, while it exercises the most

Learned, and the most Strong. It

is like a River which is so shallow

in some places, that a Lamb may

pass it, and in others so deep, that

an Elephant may swim

in it. Be very careful,

Hom. 15. in Exech. says St. Gregory the

Pope, to meditate on

the Word of God. Neglect not

these

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‘ these Divine Writings, which are
‘ as so many Epistles which our
‘ Creator has addressed to us. For
‘ what is the Holy Scripture, says he
‘ again, but a Letter which the
‘ Almighty God has vouchsafed to
‘ write to his Creature? If we should
‘ receive a Letter from the King,
‘ should we deferr the Reading it
‘ one Moment? we should not, nor
‘ could not rest till we knew what
‘ so Great a Prince demanded of us;
‘ and yet we neglect to Read the In-
‘ structions of the King of Kings, who
‘ writes not to us, but for our Sal-
‘ vation. I conjure you then, adds
‘ this Holy Pope, to apply your selves
‘ to it henceforth with a singular Af-
‘ fection, and Meditate every Day
‘ the Words of your Creator. Learn
‘ in the Word of God, how great
‘ his Divine Love is towards you.
‘ By this Reading, your Heart will
‘ regain new Warmth, and ’twill
‘ hinder your Love from being extin-
‘ guished by the Coldness
‘ of Sin and Iniquity. *Serm. 24.*
‘ Even tho’, says St. Ber- *de divers.*
‘ nard, you were dead

‘ through

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‘ through Sin, if you hear but the
 ‘ Voice of the Son of God, you shall
 ‘ live, for his Word is Spirit and Life.
 ‘ If your Heart is frozen, the Word
 ‘ of God will melt the Ice ; if you
 ‘ are luke-warm, it will inflame you,
 ‘ for his Word is all Fire ; if you are
 ‘ in the Darkness of Ignorance, his
 ‘ Word will be a Lamp to enlighten
 ‘ your Steps, and a Light to shine in
 ‘ the Paths where you walk. The
 rest of the Holy Fathers have spoken
 like these two Saints, and all have
 advised the Reading the Holy Scrip-
 ture as one of the most excellent
 Means to arrive at Perfection.

But above all, the Reading of the
 Gospels, and the other Books of the
New Testament, is wonderfully profita-
 ble. ’Tis there we frame to our
 selves a just Idea of that Holiness to
 which we are called, of those solid
 Maxims, capable to preserve us from
 the Corruption of the Age, of pure
 Morality, of true Christian Thoughts,
 of a Spirit elevated above the things
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 Jesus Christ. ’Tis there, in a word,
 may be found the true Rule of a
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Christian Life, and the perfect Model we ought to imitate.

Read then every Day a Chapter of the *New Testament*, or at least half of one. Read it Kneeling, and before you begin, invoke the Assistance of the Holy Ghost by a short Prayer: Read leisurely, attentively, with a Spirit full of Faith and Religion, and a sincere Desire to know and perform the Will of God. You will find by Experience, that *the Word of God is lively and forcible, and more piercing than any two-edged Sword; and reaching unto the Division of the Soul and the Spirit, of the Joints also, and the Marrows*, Heb. 4. 12. And that it has a most particular Vertue to Convert Souls, to deliver them from their Crimes, and raise them to the highest Perfection.

C H A P.

C H A P. III.

To have a firm Resolution to Live according to the Rules of the Gospel.

BUT before you engage your self to Read good Books, a strong Resolution ought to be made, of performing all your Duties as they come to your Knowledge ; for it is better to be ignorant of the Law of God, than after it is known to violate it : *That Servant, says Christ, that knew the Will of his Lord, and prepared not himself, and did not according to his Will, shall be beaten with many Stripes, Luke 12. 47.* The first Disposition a Soul ought to be in, who desires to have Rules for her Spiritual Conduct, is to have a strong Will and an earnest Desire to be saved, to prefer our Lord Jesus Christ before all things, to be ready to sacrifice all to preserve his Grace and Favour, and to resolve to use all the Violences which our Saviour speaks of, to obtain

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tain the Kingdom of Heaven. Without this Disposition 'tis in vain for us to compose Books, or for you to read 'em. The Design of saving our selves is great, noble and generous; the Obstacles we meet with are infinite, and require an Heroick Courage to surmount them. A Christian undertakes mighty things when he pretends to fulfil the Signification of his Name. It is not enough to practise the outward Exercises of Religion. The assisting at Divine Service, Singing Psalms, and frequenting the Sacraments, are Actions in which Custom, Vanity and Self-Love have often a greater share than true and solid Piety, and yet 'tis this true and sincere Piety which God requires of us. *The time cometh, and now it is, when the true Adorers shall adore the Father in Spirit and Truth; for the Father also seeketh such to adore him. God is a Spirit, and they that adore him, must adore him in Spirit and Truth, John 4. 23.* The true Christian then is not he that is so in shew only, but he that is so in his Heart, and one who

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who seeks not the Praises of Men,
but of God.

If you would know who is a true Christian, I shall tell you, he is one who seriously embraces the Religion of Jesus Christ, who looks upon the Gospel as the Rule of that Divine Religion, and makes it his Endeavours to live up to that Sanctity which our Saviour demands of all who have the Happiness to be his Disciples. We must not imagine, as many do, that the Gospel was only writ for those we call Religious: it was made for all Christians in general. We are, all of us, Religious Persons, of the most excellent, as well as the most ancient, of Religions, which is that of Jesus Christ. We have a Founder, a Habit, a Rule, Vows, Exercises and Means of Sanctification. Christ is the Founder of our Religion, he established it at the Price of his Blood. Innocence, Sanctity, Chastity, and all other Vertues, make up the Habit we are to wear, and which we received in Baptism, *where we put on the New Man, which is, created according to God, in Justice*
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Land Sanctity of Truth, Eph. 4. 24.
The Gospel is our Rule, our Vows
are the Solemn Promises we made at
the Font, of renouncing Satan, with
all his Pumps and Works, and of
living according to God, and for
God in Jesus Christ. Our Exercises
are Prayer, Pennance, Communion,
Charity towards our Neighbour, and
generally all sorts of good Works.
This is the Doctrine of the Scripture
and the Holy Fathers. *St. Basil*, as
well as *St. John Chrysostome*, taught
it in exprefs Terms. And the better
to carry on the Design of this Work,
and to support its Authority, I have
thought fit briefly to set down what
these two Great Saints have said up-
on this Subject.

‘ Do you think, says *St. Basil*, that
‘ the Gospel was not written as well
‘ for Married Persons as for Monks?
‘ undoubtedly ’tis by this Rule that
‘ both are to be judged. ’Tis well
‘ if Married Persons obtain Pardon
‘ for the Faults committed in that
‘ State; in every thing else they are
‘ as much obliged to live like Saints
‘ as the *Religious* are, Christ having
‘ pro-

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‘ pronounced the Oracles of his Gos-
 ‘ pel to all sorts of People ; and if it
 ‘ happened sometimes that he spoke
 ‘ to his Disciples in particular, he
 ‘ took care to add, *That which I say*
 ‘ *to you, I say to all the World.* The
 ‘ Tyes of Marriage, and the Engage-
 ‘ ments of the World will never ju-
 ‘ stify, or any way dispense with the
 ‘ laborious Task of living like a Chri-
 ‘ stian. We must not think, because
 ‘ we live in the World, that it is
 ‘ lawful to live according to the
 ‘ Maxims of it. On the contrary,
 ‘ as we are more exposed to the Tem-
 ‘ ptations of the Devil, breathe a
 ‘ more corrupt Air, meet with no-
 ‘ thing but Snares and Ambushes on
 ‘ all sides ; in a word, as we are here
 ‘ continually falling into Occasions
 ‘ of Sin, we are the more obliged to
 ‘ use our utmost Care and Vigilance :
 ‘ for a Man engaged in the World
 ‘ may be compared to a Champion
 ‘ who enters the Lists with his Ad-
 ‘ versary, where Fight he must, and
 ‘ either Conquer or Die.

‘ Believe not, says St. *Chrysostome*,
 ‘ that God requires from Worldly
 ‘ Men

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Men a Sanctity quite different from that of Monks: 'tis true, the one indeed may Marry, and the other may not; but in all things else the Case is equal; they have both received the same Laws, and are both subject to the same Punishments. When Jesus Christ forbid Swearing, Revenge, Detraction, &c. he made no Distinction. When he laid his Curse upon those who led a Life of Pleasure and Sensuality; when he pronounced the Evangelical Beatitudes, he spoke not only to *Religious*, but to all the Faithful without Exception. He was not heard to say, If a *Religious* Man Swear, he shall be punished, but not the *Secular*. This Distinction is the Invention of Man, and not at all grounded on the Word of God, which equally obliges all who will be saved, to keep his Commandments.

St. Paul, speaking to Married Persons, requires of them as great a share of Sanctity, as we can expect from the most perfect Monks. What Disengagement does he prescribe to
us

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' us all ? what Modesty in our
 ' Cloaths ? what Temperance in our
 ' Diet ? what Moderation in the Use
 ' of our Riches ? He strictly forbids
 ' Curlings of Hair, Pearls, Embroi-
 ' deries, and costly Habits. He de-
 ' clares, that that Widow who passes
 ' her Life in Jollity and Pleasure, is
 ' dead in the Eyes of God. *Having*
 ' *Food, says he, and Rayment, let us*
 ' *be contented,* 1 Tim. 6. 8. *They who*
 ' *are Married, let them be as if they*
 ' *were not, and they who use the World,*
 ' *as if they used it not,* 1 Cor. 7. 29,
 ' 30, 31. What more can be expected
 ' from those we call *Religious* ? As
 ' to what regards the Tongue, no-
 ' thing can be more strict than what
 ' he enjoins all Christians. He con-
 ' demns not only all bitter, passio-
 ' nate, and reproachful Language, but
 ' all vain Babbling, a Fault too com-
 ' mon now a days. He banishes
 ' from our Conversation not only all
 ' Expressions which border the least
 ' upon Immodesty, but even all
 ' Raillery ; and the Gospel goes yet
 ' farther, when it assures us of the
 ' strict Account we are to give at the
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The Spiritual Director. 21

Day of Judgment, of every idle Word. *Let not the Sun,* says St. Paul, *go down in your Anger : see that you render not Evil for Evil to any one, but be always ready to do Good to each other, and towards every one,* 1 Thes. 5. 15. 'What shall I say of *Charity*, that Queen of Virtues, which St. Paul styles the *Bond of Perfection* ? does he not require it of all Christians ? would he not have us love one another, even as Christ has loved us ? and does not another Apostle tell us, *We ought to lay down our Lives for our Brethren, as Jesus Christ has laid down his Life for us* ? 1 John 3. 16. and does not St. Paul again say, we ought to be truly dead to Sin, and live only for God ?

'Let us not therefore say, that the Rules of a Christian Life are either not commanded, or not possible to be observed by Worldly Men ; and that such sublime Perfection is only attainable by the *Religious*. There is nothing so pernicious as this false Opinion. It maintains the greatest part of Libertines in their

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' their Disorders, and encourages im-
 ' perfect Souls in their loose and lazy
 ' Lives. Believe it, God exacts of us
 ' all the self same Sanctity. The
 ' Means of arriving to it, may be dif-
 ' ferent ; but the *Religious* have no
 ' other *Aim* than we have. Their
 ' Design is to save themselves, and
 ' so is ours. They cannot be saved
 ' but by the Narrow way, and we
 ' shall never be saved by walking in
 ' the Broad one. To avoid gross
 ' and scandalous Crimes, is no great
 ' Merit ; but to be saved, it behoves
 ' us to practise many and great Ver-
 ' tues. Shall I instance to you some
 ' whom Almighty God has con-
 ' demned without being guilty of
 ' enormous Sins ? The rich Man,
 ' who after his Death was Buried in
 ' Hell, was neither reputed a Swearer,
 ' Thief, nor Adulterer. He wore
 ' rich Cloaths indeed, he made good
 ' Cheer, and neglected the poor Beg-
 ' gar at his Door. This was all his
 ' Crime ; he had no Commiseration
 ' for the Poor. And is this a Fault
 ' rarely to be met with in our Days ?
 ' The foolish Virgins had no Oil in
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their Lamps, that is, they had no Charity. This was enough for the Bridegroom to shut the Door against 'em, and to tell 'em, *I know you not.* Those who entered the Hall where the King made his Marriage-Feast, were cast out ; not for any Rudeness or Disorder committed there, but because they durst appear without their Wedding-Garment.

Hence we may conclude, that the Gospel being preached and made for all, we all are bound to observe it ; we all must labour to acquire the Sanctity demanded by it ; we ought all to be thoroughly perswaded, that it is the only way which leads to Heaven, and that every other way is sure to end in everlasting Death. 'Tis true, the Methods and the Exercises which are used in Religious Houses, to arrive at such Perfection, are different from what is usually prescribed to Worldly Persons ; but their *Vertues* are always the same, altho' their *Exercises* are not. These two things we commonly confound, to wit, the *Exercises* and *Vertues* of a Christian Life. We imagine, for Example,

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Example, that a modest, homely Dress is only fit for Cloysters, where they wear a certain *Habit*, poor and plain. We fancy, that the *Recollection* which is practised in Religious Houses, is a thing peculiar to their Character, because we find, that only they have certain Hours allotted them for keeping Silence. We imagine also, that a *Penitential* Life belongs only to them, because they *Fast*, and practise several *Austerities* commanded by Superiors. 'Tis a great Mistake, these Vertues are Evangelical. We find them in the Gospel, which is ours as well as theirs. And tho' we have not (as the Religious have) so great Advantages to make the Practice of them easy: nevertheless we are all indispensably obliged to have them, and to practise them. Our *Modesty*, our *Moderation* *must be known to all*, Phil. 4. 5. Our *Recollection* of Mind must be preserved amidst the Multitude of our Employments. We are equally obliged to Mortify and Circumcise our Hearts, and to subdue all our sensual Desires. The Precept of
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continual Prayer, Thes. 5. 17. is as much for us as them: and tho' we are not bound to Sing in Choir, at certain Hours, as they do; yet our Hearts must be, as much as theirs, continually united to God, by Love and frequent Prayer. Tho' we have not made a Vow of *Poverty*, yet we must be, as well as they, entirely disengaged from all the Riches of the Earth, and never set our Hearts upon them whilst we use them. Altho' we have not Vowed *Obedience*, we are all obliged to be attentive to the Commands of God, and that we may say, with Holy David; *Behold, as the Eyes of Servants are in the hands of their Masters, and as the Eyes of the Hand-maid are in the hands of her Mistress; so are our Eyes to the Lord our God, till he have Mercy on us*, Psal. 122. 2, 3.

'Tis only for such as are convinced of these great Truths, that I have composed this Work; and therefore let none be surpris'd, if the Rules I intend to propose, seem strict, difficult, and perhaps disagreeable to Self-Love and Corrupt-Nature. I

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did not make the Gospel : as it is, I found it, and hold my self obliged to deliver it to the Faithful in its perfect Purity, without the least Alteration, knowing very well, that what St. John said of the Apocalyps in particular, is applicable to the whole Scripture : *I declare*, says he, *unto every one that heareth the Words of the Prophecy of this Book, If any Man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the Plagues that are written in this Book : and if any Man shall take away from the Words of the Book of this Prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the Holy City, and from the things which are written in this Book, Ch. 22. ver. 18, 19.*

C H A P. IV.

Of P R A Y E R.

THAT we cannot of our selves, without the Help of God's Grace, acquire that Sanctity to which our Religion

Religion calls us, is a Point of our Faith. *Without me, says our Saviour, you can do nothing, John 15. 5. Salvation, says St. Paul, depends not of the Willer, nor of the Runner, but of God who shews Mercy, Rom. 9. 16.* This then is the Ground of Prayer. We stand in continual need of the Divine Grace; and Prayer is the Means Almighty God has ordained for the obtaining it. *Ask, says our Saviour, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened, Luke 11. 9, 10.* And in another place he bids us *always Pray, and not be weary, Luke 18. 1.* and invites us to it, by the Parable of the Widow that brought her Cause before a Wicked Judge, who could not be wrought upon either by Justice or Compassion; yet at length granted her Suite, meerly because of her Importunity: by which we are to understand, how much greater Assurance we have of being heard, when we importune Almighty God,

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who is all Goodness, all Justice and Mercy ; since we see this wicked, hard-hearted Judge was not able to resist the Widows Perseverance. Prayer is very often recommended by *St. Paul* ; and writing to the *Thessalonians*, he bids them, and in them all the Faithful, *to Pray without ceasing*, *Thef. 5. 17.*

Prayer, says *St. John Climacus*,
 ‘ is in effect the Source of all Vertues,
 ‘ the Channel through which all the
 ‘ Gifts of God, and Graces of Jesus
 ‘ Christ pass into our Souls ; it is its
 ‘ Nourishment, and the Light which
 ‘ dissipates all Darkneses of the
 ‘ Mind, an excellent Remedy against
 ‘ Despair, an assured Pledge of the
 ‘ Love of God in the Soul, and Mark
 ‘ of its Predestination. By Prayer,
 ‘ says *St. Ephrem*, Vertues are gotten
 ‘ and preserved ; it maintains Tem-
 ‘ perance, suppresses Choler, puts a
 ‘ stop to the aspiring Designs of Pride,
 ‘ and to every least Motion of Envy ;
 ‘ it blots out the very Remembrance
 ‘ of Injuries, brings down the Holy
 ‘ Ghost upon us, and even raises up
 ‘ our Souls to Heaven.

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Prayer is to the Christian Life, what Respiration is to the Natural; as long as we are able to draw Breath, we are not Dead, and while our Hearts retain the least Strength to Pray, we cannot be said to be Dead; and if we were, yet Prayer is capable even to raise us again. *Blessed be God, says David, who hath not taken away my Prayer, nor his Mercy from me, Psal. 65. 20.* The Prophet joins these two things, *Mercy and Prayer*, to teach us, that whoever Prays as he ought, can never perish. *If you being naught, says our Saviour, know how to give good Gifts to your Children; how much more will your Father from Heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask him, Luke 11. 13.* The Christian therefore that neglects to Pray, neglects the Concern of his Salvation, and abandons the most powerful Help that God has given him for his Defence and Preservation. He is like a Combatant, who in the middle of the Fight throws away his Arms; and what can he then expect but certain Destruction?

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Be zealous then for Prayer ; make this Holy Exercise your chief Employment ; let nothing whatsoever take place of so important a Duty. But you must be very careful that your Prayer consists not in dry Speculation , and void of that Spirit which renders it efficacious, and acceptable with God. You must not think it a simple Act of the Understanding, the dwelling on a few Spiritual Thoughts, or a Discourse upon some Pious Subject. Prayer is the Cry of a Heart truly sensible of its Misery, and sincerely desirous to be delivered from it. This is the sort of Prayer to which God is never Deaf ; but this must be the Work of the Holy Ghost. *'Tis the Spirit of God,* says St. Paul, *that helps our Infirmitie : for what we should Pray, as we ought, we know not : but the Spirit himself requesteth for us with Groanings unspeakable,* Rom. 8. 29. ' For Prayer, as St. *Augustin* says, is most commonly better performed by Sighs and Tears, than Words ; and these Sighs and Tears fail not to reach the Throne of him who made
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'all things by his own Word, and who stands not in need of ours.

When therefore you are about to Pray, first offer your self to the Holy Ghost, beg that your Prayer may be sanctified by the Operation of his Divine Grace, that he will open the Mouth of your Heart, that he will give Motion to your Tongue, and put upon your Lips Expressions worthy of God. Endeavour all you can, that your Prayer may partake of that Sacred Fire mentioned by the Royal Prophet, when he said, *My Heart was enflamed within me, and a Fire was kindled in my Soul*, Psal. 38.
4. Banish all Coldness, Distraction, Tepidity and Sloth; and never go to Pray but with the utmost Vigour and Fulness of your Soul, that your Prayer may be agreeable, not only to the Greatness of him you are Praying to, but to the Excellence of those Benefits you Pray for; and know, that Almighty God is rather provoked than appeased by a tepid and negligent Prayer.

C H A P. V.

Of the Qualities of a good Prayer.

THE Holy Ghost, who commanded us to be faithful and constant in Prayer, commands us likewise to prepare our selves for it. *Prepare thy Heart for Prayer, lest thou be like unto a Man who would tempt God, Eccl. 10. 24.* Now, among the Dispositions set down by the Saints, as requisite for Prayer, there are two general ones, which include all others, to wit, *Purity of Heart*, and *Fervour*. These are the Qualities which make our Prayers ascend up to the highest Heavens, which find a favourable Access to the Throne of Grace, and to which nothing can be refused. This made St. *Augustine* say, that the Prayer which is pure and holy, pierces the very Heavens, and never returns without obtaining its Request : and elsewhere he says, that the Efficacy of Prayer is very great, when 'tis pure. It is like a faithful

faithful Messenger, who is sure to perform his Errand. It opens those Doors where no Flesh can find Entrance. As Prayer is a Holy Familiarity, and Sacred Union with God, as it is in Prayer that he communicates himself to those he loves, that he speaks to them Heart to Heart, that he even loads them with his Graces, and reserves nothing from them, as it is then he takes Pleasure to make them feel, by the unspeakable Effusions of his Love, the Effect and Accomplishment of these Words of the Scripture: *My Delights are to be with the Children of Men,* Prov. 8. 31. so on the other side, he pretends, that these Souls shall serve him with an inviolable Fidelity, nor will he give himself to them but in proportion, as they give themselves to him.

Those who live in Mortal Sin, and take no care to Reform, seldom or never experience the Sweetness of Prayer, such Prayers being neither agreeable to God, nor profitable to themselves. On the contrary, the Wise Man says in plain Terms, *He that*

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turneth away his Ears from hearing the Law, his Prayer shall be execrable, Prov. 28. 9. 'Tis a thing little thought on in the World. There are a great many who live on in a Course of habitual Sin, and yet cease not to have a good Opinion of their Prayers, altho' the Scripture assures them, that *Wisdom will not enter into a malicious Soul, nor dwell in a Body subject to Sins,* Sap. 1. 4. ' These sort of People, says St. Gregory, may say long Prayers, if they please; but their Lives give their Prayers the Lie, and they shun, by their Actions, those Heavenly Goods they seem to ask. Sometimes perhaps in Prayer they may let drop a Tear or two; but that's no sooner over than they return to their vicious Courses: they easily yield to the least Attacks of Pride, Avarice or Impurity. Every little Contradiction raises their Passion, and disturbs their Peace. In a word, says this Great Saint, they Pray and they Weep, and the next Moment they forget their Tears, and

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‘and begin again to lead a Life
‘worthy to be deplored.

The greatest part nevertheless of these find no Relish at all in Prayer, they are rather disgusted with it, and avoid it as a Torment, because the Sweets of Prayer are only reserved for the Just; which made *David* say, *Is much Peace to them who love thy Law?* Psal. 118. 165. and another, *Who hath resisted God, and hath had Peace?* Job 9. 4.

You may easily experience in your self how sweet, agreeable and delightful Prayer is to you, while your Conscience cannot reproach you with any considerable Breach of your Duty; and on the contrary, what a Dullness and Coldness you perceive in Prayer, while you lead a loose, negligent and dissipated Life, unworthy the Sanctity of your Profession? and truly 'tis very just and reasonable it should be so: for if Kings do not usually communicate themselves to any but those of known Fidelity and Affection, we ought not to be surprized if God deals in the like manner with us, and admits
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only those into a close Familiarity with him, who shew the greatest Zeal for his Glory, and Affection for his Law. A good Life then, and Purity of Heart, are the Foundation of every good Prayer, and the Essential Preparation for it. Not but that Sinners may, and ought, to Pray, tho' their Lives are full of Faults and Imperfections; and God will not fail to hear them, provided they testify a sincere and unfeigned Sorrow for their Sins, and a real Desire to be Converted, that they bewail the horrible State they are in in the Eyes of God, and beg with all their Hearts the Grace to be delivered from it.

Fervour, which is the second Quality of a good Prayer, is of no less Necessity and Importance than a good Life; and indeed one may say is altogether inseparable from it: for 'tis impossible that those Prayers can ever be pure that are not fervent. And to Pray fervently, we need but a little of that lively Faith, of which one Grain alone, the Gospel tells us, would be sufficient to remove Mountains. 'When I have no Faith, says

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‘ *St. Jerome*, I cannot Pray; but if
‘ I had a true and lively Faith, I
‘ would purify this Heart of mine,
‘ whereby I might see my God, I
‘ would knock my Breast, bedew my
‘ Cheeks with Tears, my whole Bo-
‘ dy would be seized with a Holy
‘ Horror, I would throw my self at
‘ the Feet of my Lord, bath them
‘ with my Tears, and wipe them
‘ with my Hair. I would cling to
‘ the Trunk of the Cross, and would
‘ not stir thence till I had obtained
‘ Pardon of my Sins. But alas! it
‘ is for want of Faith, that it often
‘ happens while I am at Prayer, that
‘ my Spirit is straying and wandring
‘ in a thousand places, and my Ima-
‘ gination crouded with vain and i-
‘ dle, if not with sinful Thoughts.
‘ Was it in this manner that *Jonas*
‘ Prayed in the Whale’s Belly, or the
‘ three Children in the Fiery Furnace,
‘ or *Daniel* in the Lyons Den, or the
‘ Thief upon the Cross? Now, to
‘ obtain Fervour in Prayer, you need
‘ but consider well these three things;
‘ Who it is you are speaking to, who
‘ it is that speaks, and what it is you
‘ are

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are speaking about. You are speaking to God, before whom the Angels themselves trembling, fall prostrate. You your self, who speak, are a wretched, poor Sinner, full of nothing but Iniquity and evil Inclinations, and a hundred times have deserved Hell. The Business you are speaking about, is no less than your Eternal Salvation or Damnation. Now, if after this you will Pray with Sloth and Negligence, I think I may, without Rashness, say you have no Faith, and that your Prayer is vain.

C H A P. VI.

Of the different kinds of Prayer.

PRayer is commonly divided into Vocal and Mental. Vocal Prayer is when we recite the *Psalms* or other Prayers, either by Reading, or by Heart. Mental Prayer consists in Meditating the Truths and Mysteries of our Salvation, which the Soul makes use of to excite in her
such

such Holy Affections and Pious Motions as may give her a Disgust to all the things of this World, and an ardent Love for those which are eternal. Both these kinds of Prayer are excellent, and both authorized by the Practice of the Church, and of the Saints. Vocal Prayer the Church has established in all her Assemblies, and to that end composed the Divine Office, which she has appointed to be Sung publicly, and at which she requires all her Children to assist every Sunday and Holiday. There is not a Religious Community but what in this has followed the Wisdom of her Conduct, and has set out certain Vocal Prayers, to be said so many times a Day. And nothing, methinks, convinces me more than this, of the Error and Illusion of those who decry Vocal Prayer as unprofitable, and as if it were even a Hindrance to the Prayer of the Heart, and who would encourage every Body to decline it, and to apply themselves to this sort of interior Prayer, where all the Powers of the Soul seem as it were interdicted, and

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and deprived of their most natural Operations, and where, under pretext of hearkening to God in the bottom of their Hearts, they bring upon themselves a certain Sloth and Laziness of Mind, which cannot but expose them to very great Dangers and Delusions. 'Tis nevertheless a Practice too common now a days, and there may be found every where those, who without being instructed, without Reading, and very often without Knowledge or Understanding, shall remain whole Hours in a kind of Contemplation, without Action or Motion, like Statues; and pretend that this kind of imaginary Prayer or Abstraction, is proper for, and easily attainable by all sorts of People; they are like those Builders who begin first with the Roof, and then lay the Foundation. They are for laying aside all Vocal Prayer, all Books, Festivals and Mysteries, as things troublesome and distracting. Nay, they take no small Pains to place themselves in the Rank of Brutes, by rendering their Sense and Reason useless.

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Be you careful to avoid this Rock: You cannot imagine how much Deceit and Illusion it has in it. True Contemplation indeed, of which this is but a false Resemblance, is an excellent thing; it is one of the greatest of God's Gifts; but as it is not absolutely necessary for Salvation, so 'tis a Grace not bestowed on all the World. What do I say? God having given it but to a very small number of chosen Souls, and such as live in an Eminent Degree of Sanctity. 'Tis like the King's Closet, where none but Favourites are allowed to enter. 'Tis like *Mount Sinai*, where only *Moses*, and such as him, were admitted to behold God Face to Face, and to speak to him as one Friend to another. The People, that is to say, the ordinary Souls, ought to stay below; and those who dare presume to force so Sacred a place, deserve to be repulsed with Shame, and to be delivered over to the Angel of Darkness, transformed into an Angel of Light, to deceive the Proud.

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Neglect not therefore Vocal Prayer, but go on in the way the Church has pointed out for all her Children ; you'll find none better for you. Make use as much as you can of those very Prayers the Church has made choice of for her self. In the Morning you may say the *Prime*, which you'll find among the Hours, and if you have not leisure to say the *Psalms*, say at least the Prayers that follow them. Before *Mass*, you may say *Teirce*, and *Sexte* after: the *None* at Three, *Vespers* at Six, and *Compline* before you go to Bed. If you have not time to say all these Hours, say at least *Prime* in the Morning, and *Compline* at Night. For no Christian ought to be excused from Prayer at least twice a Day ; and these are the Prayers I would recommend to you. You must be aware how you affect certain Prayers which are neither used in the Church nor taken from the Scriptures, and whose Authors are unknown ; which contain very often supposed Indulgences, false Miracles, deceitful Promises, and such like Errors, contrary

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ry to the Gospel. Such corrupt Nourishment will never maintain a solid and illuminated Piety. The *Psalms*, *Prayers*, drawn from the Scripture, the *Office of the Church*, and such, in a word, as are conformable to its Doctrine, are the only Vocal Prayers we ought to stick to. Let not your Devotion consist in running over a great many Prayers. 'Tis hard to maintain long that Attention and Fervour, without which Prayer is but very weak. Call often to mind this Precept Christ has left us: *When you are Praying, speak not much, as the Heathen: for they think, that in their much Speaking they may be heard. Be not you therefore like to them, for your Father knows what is needful for you before you ask him, Mat. 6. 7, 8.*

' When we pray and move our Lips, ' says St. *Augustin*, it is not to teach ' God our Wants: Prayer is not in ' the bare pronouncing of Words, ' but in the Heart. A continual De- ' sire formed by Charity, and sup- ' ported by Faith and Hope, is a ' continual Prayer. But we do not, ' however, omit at certain Hours to ' Pray

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‘ Pray Vocally, to the end that the
 ‘ Words may bring into our Mind
 ‘ the things we are to Pray for, and
 ‘ that by entring into our selves, we
 ‘ may be able to know how much
 ‘ we profit, how much our Desires
 ‘ encrease, and that we may still la-
 ‘ bour to render them more vigorous
 ‘ and ardent ; for the Effect of Pray-
 ‘ er is measured by the Fervour of
 ‘ the Spirit.

Mental Prayer is nothing else but
 this lively and ardent Desire, in
 which *St. Austin* makes the very Es-
 sence of Prayer to consist. This De-
 sire ought perpetually to be in our
 Hearts, like a Fire, to animate, pu-
 rify and elevate our Souls ; but be-
 cause the Necessities of Life are such
 as are apt to cool, and very often ex-
 tinguish it ; it behoves us to be care-
 ful from time to time, to feed and
 kindle it again, by throwing on
 more Fuel, that is to say, by en-
 tring into our selves, examining our
 Conduct, seeing whether we march
 streight in the Paths of the Gospel,
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stament, the following of Christ, the Psalter with Notes upon it, are most proper to produce these good Effects. There are other excellent Books of Meditation, which may be left to every ones Choice, provided they are solid and approved.

Those who are but beginning to practise Mental Prayer, should, methinks, have always a Book before 'em when they Meditate, to have recourse to as often as they loose Attention, or as the Mind is dissipated. I would not read above two or three Lines at a time, and then pause a few Moments, to Meditate on them, and so go on, giving from time to time a continual Exercise to the Mind, which otherwise of it self would soon grow weary. Never set your self to reason upon Truths of which you are already convinced; it is an unprofitable Fatigue to your Mind. You need but to draw from them such Consequences as are applicable to your Wants. Reflect often on your own Conduct, and think on the Account you must give of all the Lights and Talents God has

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has entrusted you with. Say, with the Apostle, that for a Man to know to do Good, and not to do it, is a great Sin. Let that principal end of your Meditation be to raise in your Heart holy Desires, ardent Affections, and good Resolutions.

When you have placed your self in the Presence of God, in order to Pray, drive out of your Heart, which is his Temple, every thing that is not agreeable to so Great and Sacred an Action, imitating the Example of our Saviour, who would not suffer any thing profane to remain in his House, because it was Consecrated the House of Prayer. You are then to cast off all Affection to Creatures, that he alone may be the Object of your Thoughts. Begin your Prayer with a profound Acknowledgement of your Unworthiness, to the end you may find the Effect of that Promise made in Scripture, *viz. That the Prayer of him that humbles himself penetrates the Clouds, and reaches up to the Throne of God, Eccl. 35. 21.* Never fail to take a Book along with you, to explain the Myſtery on which
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you Meditate, or at least bear in Memory some Scripture Sentences, which may serve to the same purpose, to express your Wants, and spur you on to Vertue. Consider with Attention the Subject you Meditate upon, endeavour throughly to comprehend it, that it may inflame your Heart, excite your Piety, and produce Holy Affections in your Soul. If your own Miseries and Wants are the Subject of your Thoughts, enter into a strict Discussion of your Conscience, and fear not to judge yourself with the utmost Severity, by laying open to Almighty God, all your Infirmities and Necessities, to the end he may Judge you in Mercy. Then return him humble Thanks for his Goodness in suffering you, his unworthy Servant, to appear before him. In fine, that these Exercises may be rendred more easy, you may make use of any Passages in your Reading, which you find the most moving and edifying, and of such Thoughts as may be most capable to encrease your Devotion.

But

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But if you find this Method neither agreeable nor profitable for you, by no means oblige your self to it. The Spirit of God is free, and no ways confined to Rules or Human Practices; he communicates himself to Souls, and inspires them in what manner he pleases. When therefore you have put your self in a fit Disposition for Prayer, abandon your self wholly to the Conduct of his Spirit, with a firm Confidence that he, who by a continual Providence, preserves the Life of your Body, will not refuse you the Grace of Prayer; without which you cannot preserve the Life of your Soul. Leave to him the entire ordering and disposal of your inward Man, and follow in a perfect Simplicity, the Impulse of his Holy Spirit, whether he leads you to Meditate his Divine Truths, or to speak to him concerning your own, your Brethren's, or the Church's Necessities; whether he pleases to raise you to the Contemplation of his ineffable Beauties and Perfections, or will have you Adore him in a profound Silence; whether he draws
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and unites you to him by the Sacred Bonds of his Love, or favours you with his Heavenly Lights, or produces Holy Affections in your Soul, or gives you Rules and Measures for your particular Conduct; or whether he pleases to exercise and prove you by Drynesses and Distractions, of which I shall speak in the next Chapter; and if any are desirous to know more, concerning the different Kinds and Methods of Prayer, they may read what St. Bernard, St. Theresa, Thaulerus and other approved Authors have said on that Subject.

C H A P. VII.

Of Drynesses and Distractions in Prayer.

A Late Author having published an excellent Treatise of Prayer, wherein this Matter is admirably handled; and this Book perhaps not being easily to be met with every where, I have thought fit to give the
D Reader

Reader a short View of what this Author teaches. In the first place he observes, that according to the Doctrine of St. *Gregory* the Pope, St. *Bernard*, and many other great Masters in the Spiritual Life, there are three States or Conditions, through which all true Christians pass; the first is that of Souls at their Conversion, who resolving to forsake their evil ways, begin to enter into the ways of God. The second is that of Souls, who have already made some Progress in Vertue, who courageously withstand the Attacks of Sin, and diligently strive to get Dominion over their Passions. The third is that of the Perfect, who enjoy a solid and profound Peace, and find no Uneasiness at all in the Yoke of the Gospel. He observes, that young Beginners or Novices in the Christian Religion, find immediately great Sweetness in the Service of God; much Gust and Relish in Prayer, and no small Comforts in the New Life they have begun. God treats them as little Children, he nourishes them with Milk, he engages them by Endearments

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dearments and Caresses, he makes himself known to them, he curbs the Devils Fury, and permits him not to disturb them at their Devotions, he keeps him in Chains while these little ones grow up, and become strong. They take Pleasure in all their Exercises; Meditation, Reading, Singing Psalms, and even Penance to them, are full of Charms. They see, they taste how sweet the Lord is: they weep at their Prayers, they sigh in their Meditations, their Life is a continual Feast, and they never cease Singing Allelujahs. But this Condition is not to last always with them. They are not to be always Children; they must not be always fed with Milk. A time comes when Christ seems to withdraw and hide himself from them, and with his Absence deprive them of all sensible Comforts; a desperate War succeeds their Peace, and dreadful Combats the Victory which they thought was in their hands; and now, instead of sweet Caresses, nothing but sharp and severe Tryals. This is that second State of the Soul, in which she

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feels nothing but Troubles and Conflicts. The Yoke of our Lord, which before had appeared so sweet and easy, now seems insupportable. In the first State, while the Soul was nourished as it were at the Nurses Breast, it had no more to do than Suck; but in the second, it is like the Hireling or Labourer, forced to get his Bread by the Sweat of his Brow. The Sweets of Prayer to such a Soul, are as in the bottom of a very deep Well, not to be drawn thence but by the Strength of the Arms and great Pains taking. *David* seemed sensible of this when he said, *I would have meditated on times past, and have had before my Eyes eternal Years; but I was forced to struggle with my Heart all the Night long; I was wearied with this Exercise, and I obliged my Spirit to think upon God, Psal. 76. 6, 7.*

Next is the Condition of those, who living in a higher Degree of Perfection, seem to possess a secure Peace and Joy amidst all the Difficulties and Troubles of the World; yet even these are often exposed to many Dangers, well figured in God's Conduct

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Conduct over the Children of *Israel*. They were at first well enough treated in *Egypt*; their Fathers there grew rich and powerful. *Joseph* procured for them the most fruitful part of the whole Kingdom, and in a very short time they multiplied exceedingly. But after this State of Tranquility and Ease, follow many great Calamities, *Pharaoh's* Persecution, the dismal Barrenness of the Desert, Hunger, Thirst, Diseases, Death, and War with the Inhabitants of the *Land of Promise*, which tho' at length they entred, and established themselves in it, and tasted the Fruit of their Victories, yet they could never be so entirely rid of their Enemies, but that there still remained, by a particular Order of Providence, a sufficient Number, to give them a continual Disturbance and Vexation, and to punish them so often as they forsook the Lord.

Hence we may conclude, that Drynesses and Distractions are not always to be accounted Sins, and that many fall under these unhappy Circumstances, by the Will and Per-

mission of Almighty God. But we must be also very careful not to infer, that therefore they are in themselves good, and to be wished for, or that we ought not to endeavour, or even desire to be delivered from them. To argue thus, would be one of the most dangerous Illusions imaginable; for Dryness and Distraction are at the best but Proofs and Tryals, which God may turn to our good, and which we may, through his Grace, make a good Use of. But we must also consider, that even Sin may sometimes turn to Good to the Servants of God. 'For it is profitable ' for some, says *St. Augustine*, to fall, ' that they may rise again more humble and circumspect. And yet none will say, that we are to love Sin, on Pretence of the Benefit we possibly may, through the Mercy of God, receive by it; and much less that we ought not to desire to be freed from it, because we have thereby a continual Subject of Humiliation. Let us reflect well upon this, and consider, that tho' it be not always a Sin, yet it is always an Evil, and

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and most commonly a Punishment for some former Sin.

To comprehend well this Truth, we must examine the different kinds of Dryness and Insensibility by the several Causes whence they may proceed. For there is a certain Darkness and Insensibility, which are the just Punishment of sinful Souls, whether they are sensible of it or not. This is the State in which, according to the Royal Prophet, we cannot subsist in the Presence of God. *The Unjust shall not approach to thee, nor shall the Wicked abide before thy Eyes,* Psal. 5. 6. A Soul thus laden with the Weight of Sin, cannot bear the Light of Truth. Tho' it is not always through gross and capital Crimes that we fall into this unhappy State, but many times by insensible Degrees: for St. Bernard tells us, that the very Multitude of Business, to which we apply our selves with a Forgetfulness of God, is alone sufficient to bring upon us that Hardness of Heart, which he says is neither opened by Compunction, nor softened by Piety, nor touched with

D. 4 Prayer,

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Prayer, nor moved by Threats, but even hardened by Chastisements.

There is another kind of Insensibility and Blindness which may be incident to the better sort of Christians, when by their want of Zeal, their unmortified Lives, their vain Amusements, and such like Defects, they deprive themselves of the Lights and Onction of the Divine Grace, and so are apt to lead a Sensual and Worldly Life, tho' not such a one as is altogether void of Charity. They are not much moved to Piety, because they have but a small share of Grace; and that which they have, is as it were stifled and suppressed by their Passions, which contristate the Holy Ghost, and hinder his Habitation in their Hearts. They seek, and are fond of Carnal and Worldly Comforts; and if sometimes they seem to condemn and renounce them, yet 'tis but by halves, and never absolutely. So that they seldom bend their whole Affection towards God, nor does their Compunction, for the most part, outlast an Hour, or perhaps a Moment, because it is impossible

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sible that a Soul which abandons its self to these Distractions, should at the same time be replenished with Spiritual Comforts; for the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of the World, Fire and Lukewarmness cannot subsist in the same Heart. *The Lord, the Scripture says, will vomit the Lukewarm out of his Mouth, Apoc. 3. 16.*

'Tis most certain, that when the Hardness of our Hearts, our Dryness and Distractions, proceed from grievous Sins, or great Neglects on our parts, we ought to look upon 'em as a Punishment from God, and lament our Condition as both dreadful and dangerous, and a Mark of the extream Weakness, if not the total Absence of the Divine Grace: we are then to humble our selves, and seek Remedy, by turning to God, and never cease knocking at the Door of Mercy, till it be opened to us.

There is a third sort of Aridity and Distraction, which is permitted by Almighty God to try, exercise and purify good and pious Souls, to hum-

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ble them, and preserve them from Pride. His Graces would be apt to be abused, did he not sometimes withhold his Hand. They would not be so esteemed as they ought, nor would there be sufficient Care and Caution had to preserve them. In short, they would too often be made a Handle, to puff us up with Self-conceit, and set us above our Neighbours. Hear what *St. Bernard* says: ' There is Pride, says he, found
' in me, and therefore God has with-
' drawn himself from my Soul in
' Anger. Hence proceeds that Steri-
' lity and Indevotion which I per-
' ceive in my self. How comes my
' Heart so dry, and like to Earth
' without Water? So dry am I be-
' come, that my Eyes cannot so
' much as afford one single Tear. I
' have not now the least Gust in Sing-
' ing my Office; nor can I apply
' my self to Reading. I take no Sa-
' tisfaction in Prayer, nor know I
' how to make my usual Meditati-
' ons. I am lazy when I should
' work, and dull and drowsy when
' I should be watchful. I am apt
enough

‘ enough to be hasty and cholerick,
‘ to be obstinate and opiniatre in my
‘ Aversions, and to indulge my
‘ Tongue and Palate. Alas! the
‘ Lord visits all the Mountains round
‘ about me, and ’tis only I he comes
‘ not near: and if you ask me the
‘ Reason why? I can only tell you
‘ that ’tis Pride. ’Tis Pride must be
‘ arraigned, altho’ the Guilt appears
‘ not always to us: for God knows
‘ what we know not, and ’tis he
‘ must be our Judge. Will he who
‘ gives Grace to the Humble, take
‘ from him that is truly so, the Grace
‘ he has already given? To be de-
‘ prived of Grace then, is a Proof of
‘ our Pride, tho’ in Reality it some-
‘ times happens, that God with-
‘ draws it, not for any Pride already
‘ in us, but lest we might otherwise
‘ the more easily fall into it. We
‘ have a Proof of this in the Person
‘ of St. Paul, who suffered, much a-
‘ gainst his Will, the Provocations
‘ of the Flesh; not that he was
‘ proud, but lest he might be so.
‘ My dear Children, adds St. Ber-
‘ nard, this very Reflection, that
‘ Grace

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‘ Grace is taken from us on the account of our Pride, is sufficient to stifle in us all presumptuous Thoughts, and will be a great Help to regain new Fervour.

You see by the Doctrine of this Great Saint, that the State of Tepidity and Dryness, is so far from being desirable, that ’tis what we ought always to endeavour and pray to be delivered from. Nevertheless, if God is pleased to permit you to remain for some time in it, be not therefore troubled nor discouraged, go not out of your Road, nor quit your usual Exercises: that’s what the Devil aims at, and what you ought never to consent to. Be assured, that if this Tepidity proceeds not from any want of Faith that you know of, God will not permit it to do you harm. You have nothing to fear but Sin, and such is not Dryness. Be careful only that you fall not into the Delusion of those who prefer Darkness to Light, and who look upon the Hardness and Insensibility of their Souls as a happy State, as the Great and Royal Path to Heaven,

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ven, and preferable to the most resplendent Lights. Fly this false Spirit, which plunges simple and unwary Souls into so sad and dangerous a Condition. This it is which hinders them in their Necessities from humbling themselves under the powerful Hand of God, which makes them proud in their Poverty, takes from them the Compassion they ought to have of themselves, and reduces them to the most miserable State that poor Souls can be in, since there can be no greater Misery, according to St. *Augustine*, than to be miserable and not to be sensible of it. Altho' you should not find your self guilty of many Sins, and that your Conscience should not reproach you with any considerable Neglect, and that you were satisfied God did not punish you by these Darkneses and Dryneses for your past Faults; yet you are not to esteem and prefer this State to the Fervour of Devotion, but look upon it as a Temptation and Disorder, of which God is not the Author, and as an Effect of Sin, which renders the Soul dull and heavy,

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vy, and is a great Hindrance to its entire Conversion to God. Fear then all Distractions, altho' they be not voluntary nor imputed to you as Sin; look upon every thing as a real Evil which lessens your Attention in time of Prayer, and which robs you, tho' but for a Moment, of that infinite Object which you ought never to loose the Sight of.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the Obligation of continual Prayer, and how we may comply with it.

THE Gospel tells us we must Pray always, and not be weary: which may be done two ways. First, by setting apart every Day a certain time for Prayer, which every one may choose according to the different Circumstances of his State. Those who live in Community, are strictly bound to their Rules, to which they ought entirely to conform;

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form; 'tis what God requires of them, and there's no dispensing with it, without a manifest Breach of his Order. They who have their Livelihood to get, Merchants, Artists, Masters and Mistresses of Families, and Servants, must make Work their Prayer, by performing it in the Spirit of Religion, for the Honour of God, and in Satisfaction for their Sins: and when they have any leisure Moments to spare from their Employments, let them bestow 'em in Prayer; but remembering withal, that it is better to do the Will of God in acquitting themselves of the several Duties of their States, than in neglecting these, to cry, *Lord, Lord*. For *Prayer* out of season is *Sin*, and the ill-placed Devotion of many, cannot be too much condemn'd, who spend the greatest part of their Lives in Reading, saying long Prayers, running to Sermons and Church-Offices, instead of taking Pains, and looking after their Children and Families.

They who are free from all these Engagements, may apply themselves
more

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more closely to Prayer, and allot themselves more time for it. And here is the Rule St. *Augustine* gives upon this Subject. 'To Pray long, 'is very good and profitable, when 'other good Works and the necessary Engagements of Life permit, 'tho' even in these Actions we ought, 'as I have said, to Pray by the Desire of the Heart: for to Pray long, 'is not as some imagine, what the 'Scripture calls dilating upon 'Words; that Prayer which is supported and carried on by the Motion of the Heart, is very different 'from that which is only lengthened 'by the Multitude of Words. We 'see also in the Gospel, how our 'Blessed Lord passed whole Nights 'in Prayer; and how he redoubled 'them in his Agony in the Garden 'of *Olivet*, to leave us an Example 'we ought to follow. 'Tis observed, 'that the solitary Monks of *Egypt* 'used to make frequent, but short 'Prayers, lest that Fervour of Spirit 'which is necessary in Prayer might 'flag and abate, should they Pray 'too long at a time. Whereby it

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plainly appears, that as we ought not, by too long Prayer, to hazard the weakening of this Fervour, so also we are not to interrupt it while it may be maintained. An equal Care then ought to be had, that our Prayers consist not in a Multitude of Words, and that they be continued so long as our Fervour lasts; for what is meant by much Speaking in Prayer, is to dilate and dwell much upon Words, of which a Multitude is always superfluous when we are treating with God, how necessary soever the Subject may be: but by much Praying, is to be understood a constant Knocking at the Gate of Mercy, by the Ejaculations of a truly pious Soul, which are generally much better expressed in Sighs and Tears, than in Words and Discourses.

It appears by this Doctrine of St. *Augustine*, that the Faithful in his Days had no fixt time for Prayer: they remained more or less in it, according to the Measure of Grace and Fervour that God had given them.

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A great many there were who, after the Example of the solitary Monks of *Egypt*, Prayed not long at a time, but often, and their Prayers were chiefly Ejaculatory; and as so many Sparks of Fire from a Heart all inflamed with Divine Love. But now a days 'tis otherwise, sometimes half an Hour, sometimes whole Hours are prescribed for Prayer, and some there are who make it a great Duty and Merit to kneel out their time, maugre all the Disgusts, Distractions and Disquiets of Mind that can befall 'em: which, besides, that it does not at all agree with what we have now related of St. *Augustine*, things of this Nature ought to be left to every ones Liberty, either to follow the Custom of those they live withal, or the Call and Attraction of Grace, or the Counsel of a Wise Director: in a word, what Method they think fit, provided it be not an ill one, and suspected of Novelty.

The second Manner of Praying continually, is to do in all things the Will of God. To perform this Duty, it is not necessary to be al-

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ways upon our Knees, or prostrate on the Ground. That Christian Prays without ceasing, who makes the Law of God the Rule of his whole Life, whose Heart is filled with his Love, who strictly observes his Order and Discipline, whose only Aim and Desire is to please him, who looks upon him as the only End of all his Actions, who undertakes nothing but in his Name, and concludes all to him with Thanksgiving: Of such a one it may with Truth be said, That all his ways are Holy, that his Life is a Sacrifice of Praise, that he Prays always, and if he should sometimes, amidst the different Exercises he is engaged in, suffer his Creator to escape his Thoughts, yet he would still preserve him in the good and pious Disposition of his Heart. *St. Augustine* says,

‘ There is no Tongue a- *Aug. in Ps.*

‘ ble to set forth God’s 34.

‘ Praises whole Days to-

‘ gether; but that to praise him with-

‘ out ceasing, it sufficeth that what-

‘ ever we do be well done, and that

‘ our Actions set forth our continual

‘ Prayer.

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‘ Prayer. He tells us elsewhere, that
 ‘ our Desire is our Prayer; that if
 ‘ our Desire be not interrupted, nei-
 ‘ ther is our Prayer. That ’tis not in
 ‘ vain that the Apostle bids us Pray
 ‘ without ceasing, and that tho’ it
 ‘ cannot be effected by a continual
 ‘ Prostration before God, yet it may
 ‘ be done by a perpetual Desire to
 ‘ possess him. You interrupt not
 ‘ your Prayer, so long as what you do
 ‘ be done in the Desire of Eternal
 ‘ Rest; and you cease not to Pray
 ‘ while you cease not to desire the
 ‘ Joys of Heaven. *St. Basil* likewise
 ‘ tells us, that even while we are
 ‘ Working, we may Pray either with
 ‘ our Hearts or Lips, in Singing
 ‘ Hymns, Psalms and Canticles :
 ‘ that we ought gratefully to ac-
 ‘ knowledge the Favours and Bles-
 ‘ sings of God, who enables us to
 ‘ Work, and to beg of him, that we
 ‘ may have no other End nor Design
 ‘ in all we do but to please him.
 To live thus, is to Pray without cea-
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 God, is a Prayer. To Eat, Drink,
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Sleep, Study, Converse, with this Intention, are very good Prayers. To suffer Sickneses, Losses, Persecutions, Calumnies, Detractions with Patience, is to offer Sacrifices agreeable to the Eyes of God. In short, all we say, all we do or suffer for God, and under his Appointments, are true Prayers. A single Thought, an Elevation of the Heart, a loving Sigh, a Desire to Enjoy God, an interiour Act of Adoration, a profound Humiliation, a lively Faith, a firm Hope, a sincere Charity, a good Conscience, are Prayers which he never rejects, and which the Angels most readily present at the Throne of the Lamb.

C H A P. IX.

Of Hearing Mass.

THE great Care commonly taken by the Faithful to hear *Mass*, is one of the Practises of Piety Providence has preserved in the Relaxation of these latter Ages, to hinder
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Men from falling into Libertinism and Irreligion. For how many are there who would pass whole Weeks without thinking of Prayer, were they not happily engaged in the daily Custom of hearing *Mass*, and did they not know the wilful Neglect of it Sundays and Holidays to be a great Crime? This Practice is no less venerable for its Antiquity than for its Sanctity. The Christians of *Hierusalem* heard *Mass* every Day, insomuch as they communicated every Day. In the following Ages, they assisted at it every time it was celebrated; and we read in St. *Augustine* and St. *Chrysostom*, that it was said in many places every Day, and the true Christians failed not to be present. St. *Augustine* commends his Mother St. *Monica* for never having passed one Day in her Life without assisting at the Sacred Mystery of the Altar, from whence she knew the Church distributes to her Children the Holy Victim, whose Blood hath cancelled the Sentence of Death which held us Slaves to the Devil; and he takes notice, that this Holy

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Widow being at the Point of Death, earnestly desired to be recommended, after she was Dead, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar.

Follow then so commendable and religious a Custom ; but have a care you perform it not as the *Jew*, for Form sake only. *Mass* is not profitable to all that hear it, nor is it good to hear it without Preparation, without Respect, without Devotion. Would you think that there are of the Holy Fathers who demand of the Faithful almost as great a Purity to assist at *Mass* as to communicate ? *St. Chrysostom* complains of some who had the Confidence to assist at the Celebration of the Sacred Mysteries without receiving, and bids 'em, *either communicate or go out with the Penitents*. The Pagans, the Catechumens, and the Penitents might be present at Exhortations, Exorcisms and Prayers ; but when the Priest began to prepare to offer the unbloody Sacrifice, they were all turned out ; the Deacon cryed aloud, *You who are in Pennance go forth : 'tis only for the Holy to partake of Holy things :* and

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and by these Words he drove from *Mass* all who appeared not Holy.

This exteriour Discipline is now no longer observed ; the Church not only permits, but commands Sinners to hear *Mass* Sundays and Holidays. She well foresaw, that if she continued to debar 'em her Mysteries, the greatest part, instead of being troubled at it, would be well pleased, and would take occasion from thence to sin more boldly, and become obdurate. She is rather willing therefore that they should come to *Mass*, and there assist with Hearts truly penitent and contrite, that they may detest their Sins, and offer the Body and Blood of their Saviour Jesus Christ, to obtain their Pardon, that they may offer themselves in Sacrifice with him, and resolve to expiate all their Sins by a wholesome Pennance.

I would have you go to *Mass* then every Day, as if you were going to *Mont Calvary*. Assist at the Commemoration of the Sacrifice of Christ, as the Holy Virgin, St. *John* and St. *Mary Magdalen* assisted at the Sacrifice of the Cross. Carry thither a Heart

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Heart full of Faith, Religion, Acknowledgment and Love. Remember that Jesus Christ is the Head, that the whole Church is his Body, that he is immolated whole, and that you being one of his Members, cannot partake of the Fruit of the Sacrifice, unless you Sacrifice your self with him. Separate not your self from this Divine Head, in the most important as well as most holy Act of our Religion. 'Tis little less than a kind of Schism, to suffer our Saviour Christ to immolate himself alone, since we are obliged by a thousand Ties to immolate our selves with him. In the Sacrifice of the Altar Jesus Christ makes in an unbloody manner the same bloody Oblation of himself, which he once made upon the Cross. He presents it to God, he approves and ratifies it, and one may say in one Sense, that he renews it; and so of us, that we there renew the Oblation we once made of our selves in the Sacrament of Baptism. We there renew that Great and Solemn Vow, wherein we promised to dwell and remain in

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Jesus Christ, to live by his Spirit, to be inseparably united to him, as Members to their Head. The Church also reminds us of this Union, when the Priests offer this terrible Mystery. She calls it the Sacrifice of all the Faithful: she says it is not only offered for them, but by them; and she ceases not to ask of the Eternal Father, the Graces which are there contained.

The best Manner therefore of hearing *Mass*, is to follow the Priest through the whole Course of this Action, in joining our Intention with that of the Church; nor can we make use of any Words better and more agreeable than those of the *Mass*, which are most of 'em taken out of the Holy Scripture, and consequently the very Words of God himself. Provide your self then of some Book, which may help you to follow the Intentions of the Priest.

Take not the time of *Mass* for saying your Beads, your Office, or for Meditation, unless you be inclined to Meditate upon the Sacrifice itself: for one may, without pronouncing

nouncing of Words, follow the Priest in the Action of the Sacrifice, and enter into the interior Dispositions of Christ upon the Altar.

Fail not every Sunday and Holiday to assist at the *Mass* of your own Parish when you can. All such Parish-Assemblies are of Apostolical Institution. They placed Pastours in every City, to the end they might take a particular Charge of their respective Flocks : and is there any thing more necessary than to instruct them, to pray for them, and with them ? Our Saviour says, when two or three are gathered together in his Name, he is in the midst of 'em. It cannot be denied, that the Congregations of Parishes are made in the Name, and by the Order and Appointment of Jesus Christ, because all Establishments that come from the Apostles, come from Christ, who gave them the Power and Commission so to do. 'Tis then a certain Truth, that Jesus Christ is present in all such Assemblies. And what a Comfort must it be to a faithful Soul to be assured, that he is in the Com-

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pany of Jesus Christ, that his Redeemer presides in that Assembly, that 'tis he who speaks to him by the Mouth of the Pastor, that 'tis he who Prays, who offers the Sacrifice, who reproveth, exhorts, calls his Sheep together, and feeds them: 'tis for our sakes, and on our account that our Saviour Christ is there. We cannot doubt of this. You are not then to quit your Parish *Mass* without some lawful Impediment, least you be excluded a share of those Heavenly Graces which it shall please our Lord there to pour forth. 'Tis without doubt upon this solid Principle that the Canons of so many Councils have been founded, which have enjoined all the Faithful, under Pain of Excommunication, to assist at least one Sunday in three at their respective Parish-*Masses*, and have forbidden all Monasteries and Curates to receive Strangers into their Churches in time of Sacrifice. Now a days these Rules are slighted by most People: nevertheless they were dictated by the Holy Ghost; *Canones Spiritus Dei conditi*. In the Church
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all things ought to be done with Order and Discipline. Observe it then in this particular: be afraid of the Censures that are thundered out against those who contemn the Canons of the Church; and remember there are Diocesses yet in being, whereat the prone Excommunication is pronounced against those who without just Cause shall pass three Sundays together without hearing their Parish-Mass. And the Council of *Trent* has given Power to the Bishops to oblige the Faithful, even by severe Censures, to hear *Mass* in their own Parishes every Sunday and Holiday, when conveniently they may.

I know very well the Church, being both a wise and tender Mother, pretends not to Tyrannize over her Children, and gives us leave upon reasonable Cause, to hear *Mass* elsewhere out of our Parish: but to abuse this Indulgence, were to mock God. Be constant then to your Parish as much as you can, and engage not in any Confraternities which may withdraw you from this Duty;

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Let no Pretence of gaining Indulgences in another Church prevail upon you to quit your own. You may go thither after your own Parish-Office is over, and by that means both perform your Duty and satisfy your Devotion.

If you are any where in the Country, and at a distance from your Parish, yet contrive, if you can, to be there at least once in three Weeks, or however send some of your Family. And cause not private *Masses* to be said in your Houses till after the Parish-*Mass* is over, lest you may hinder others from going there.

C H A P. X.

Of the Obligation of Working, and avoiding Idleness.

WORKING is one of the Duties of Man, the least common, and the most neglected. We are apt to think it only the Poor Man's Business, and find very few of the Rich that

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that look upon themselves at all concerned. The Obligation nevertheless extends to all, without Exception, and that for three great Reasons. First, God condemned all Mankind to Labour, in the Person of our first Parent, when he told him after his Sin, *The Earth shall be accursed because of thy Disobedience: it shall yield thee nothing but by Force of Labour. Brambles and Thorns shall it produce. The Bread that thou shalt eat, thou shalt get with the Sweat of thy Brow,* Gen. 3. 17. Now the Commandment God gave to this first Sinner, is a general Law; from which no Mortal can be dispensed. The Rich as well as the Poor, the King as well as the Subject, are bound by it. *Man is born for Labour,* says Job 5. 7. and St. Paul declares, *He that will not Work, ought not to Eat,* 2 Thes. 3. 10. 'Tis true, all are not obliged to the same sort of Labour. There is one kind of Work for the King, another for the Soldier, another for the Magistrate, another for the Merchant, another for the Gentleman, another for the Labourer, another for the Master, another

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another for the Servant, another for the Bishop, another for the Religious. All these have their respective Duties annexed to their several States and Conditions. And the Work that God demands of every one of 'em, is a faithful Discharge of all these Duties. To govern a Kingdom, a Province, a City, a Diocesis, a Parish; to administer Justice, suppress Vice, encourage Vertue; to employ ones Authority, Time, Fortune, Health and Life for the Glory of God, the Good of his Country, the Preservation of the State, the Salvation of Souls, are excellent Employments, and worthy of an Immortal Crown. The Obligation of taking Pains, is as general as that of doing Penitence. 'Tis therefore we see *St. Paul*, notwithstanding the continual Labours and terrible Fatigues, wherein his Mission engaged him, wrought hard for his Living. *You know*, says he to the Clergy of *Ephesus*, *that these Hands of mine have furnished all Necessaries both for my self and those with me*, Acts 20. 34. and to the *Corinthians*, *We Labour working with our own Hands*,
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1 Cor. 4. 12. and to the *Thessalonians*,
Your selves know we have not eaten the
Bread of any Man gratis, but in La-
bour and Toil Night and Day Working,
least we should be a Burthen to any one
of you: not as though we had no Au-
thority, but that we might give you an
Example. For also when we were with
you, we declared to you, that if any will
not Work, neither let him Eat. For
we have heard of certain among you
that walk disorderly, working nothing,
but meddling with what concerns them
not: and to such we denounce, and be-
seech them in our Lord Jesus Christ,
that Working with Silence, they eat their
own Bread, 2 Thef. 3. 8.

The second Reason which obliges
all to Labour, is the Example of Je-
sus Christ, who spent his whole Life
in Working, either at the Carpen-
ters Trade with St. Joseph, or in
Preaching, and zealously endeavour-
ing to save poor *Israel's* lost Sheep.
'Twas not through any Necessity
that he wrought; for he who fed
whole Cities in the Desert, could ea-
sily provide for himself without
Working. Nevertheless he was
E 5 pleased,

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pleased to lead a most painful and penitent Life for our Example ; for his Actions as well as his Doctrine, teach us our Duty. His Sacred Life is our Model, which not to imitate, is Sin. *Those whom God hath fore-known, says St. Paul, he hath also predestined to be made conformable to the Image of his Son, Rom. 8. 29.* The last Reason which obliges all to take Pains, is, because common Experience shews, that there is nothing more destructive both to Soul and Body, than a lazy, unactive and unprofitable Life. 'Tis therefore, that several Councils have obliged even Ecclesiastical Persons to learn some honest Trade, to avoid Idleness, and to gain their Living by the Sweat of their Brow. Working is a thing appointed and established by all Monks and Religious Orders, as one of the principal Exercises of a Christian Life. These Great Men disposed their Time so as never to leave the least room for Idleness, knowing full well, that by doing nothing, we are apt to do ill, and that as Idleness is a Bar to all Vertues, so it opens the Gate

Gate to all manner of Vices. It is also commonly affirmed, that he that Works and takes Pains, has but one Devil to struggle with, whereas he that is idle, has a thousand.

There is nothing that softens more the Soul than Idleness ; it keeps it always languid and unactive, it benumbs the *Heart*, it darkens and beclouds the *Mind*, it hinders good Motions in the first, and good Thoughts in the latter : and in case Temptations should happen at this time, if the Passions should enkindle, what a dangerous Condition must such a Soul be in, where the Devil attacks, wounds, and finds Entrance on all sides, who is defenceless and exposed to the Will and Power of a merciless Enemy ! Such a one in his Chamber is an unthinking, lazy Drone, and incapable of doing himself any good ; and abroad he wanders he knows not where ; he's at a loss how to pass his Time, which lies often heavy upon his Hand ; he's in search of Company, without which he cannot live ; he finds it, and in it his Destruction, for he greedily swallows

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shows all the Poisons that the World can offer him ; Amusements, Distributions, Railleries, rash Judgements, Vanity and Pride, croud in upon him, and take Possession of his Heart and Mind, whereby he becomes a Prey to all the Devils in Hell.

It is not to be told how many Souls have been lost meerly through Idleness, and that not only amongst those of the World, but even amongst the Children of God. How many seemingly pious Souls of both Sexes, have miserably fallen for want of being well employed, and for *Talking* more of their Salvation than *Labouring* for it ?

Idleness is a dreadful Enemy even to the most Perfect ; it is a *Dalila*, who discovers sooner or later the Weakness of the *Sampson's* sleeping in her Bosom, and is sure to deprive them of the Spirit of God, and deliver them over to their Enemies.

Yet those of the World are much more subject to this Vice than the Servants of God. 'Tis a Shame to Christianity to see such Multitudes pass their Lives in that unprofitable and

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and scandalous manner as they do: they Rise late, get Dressed by Noon, then to Dinner at a splendid and luxurious Table, and so pass the fore-part of the Day; after Dinner they fall to Game or Drink, receive or pay Visits; in the Evening they go to the Park, to the Play-house, or to a Ball; thence they come home to Supper; after which they fall to Play again, and so to Bed. This is the Life of a great many Christians, who think there is no great harm in all this: but let them read this terrible Text in the Gospel; *Every Tree that beareth not good Fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the Fire, Mat. 3. 10.* They think perhaps, that Working is not a Matter of Precept, but of Counsel only, and that to live unprofitably, is but a Venial Sin at the most; but they'll soon be undeceived. when they hear this Sentence pronounced by Jesus Christ: *Cast the unprofitable Servant into utter Darkness, Rom. 3. 12.* by David and St. Paul; *They have all declined from the right way, they are become unprofitable: there are none that do good, there is not so much*

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much as one, Job 15. 16. The unprofitable Man is abominable, Proverbs : The Apostate is an unprofitable Man, Ecclesiasticus : God will not receive a Multitude of unfaithful and unprofitable Children, Isaiah : Their Labours are unprofitable Labours, and the Work of their Hands is a Work of Iniquity, Jeremy : I crushed Moab as an unprofitable Vessel. Micheas : Wo to you who have only unprofitable Thoughts. Here are Authorities enough methinks to convince the most Incredulous, that an unprofitable Life is a Criminal Life, and that those who do nothing for God are in the Broad way to Perdition, how innocent soever their Lives may appear to the Eyes of Men.

Be sure therefore, that you never be found quite idle : if you Work not for your self, Work for the Poor, or for the Altar. Let every Moment be employed. You are to render an Account to God of every idle Word and Thought. Therefore Read, Write, Pray, Meditate, do the common Duties of your State, visit the Poor, help the Sick, be still doing some Good
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either to your self or others : and remember while you are at Work, to make now and then a short Ejaculatory Prayer, such as may help to keep you always in the Presence of God, and defend you against the Designs of your Mortal Enemy.

C H A P. XI.

Of Diversions and Pleasures.

IF I should exact from all my Readers the highest Point of Christian Perfection, I must tell them, that *Pleasure* is a thing can hardly be permitted 'em at all ; that the Disciples of a Crucified God ought to love nothing else but the Cross ; and that 'tis a shameful thing to see the *Members* all covered with Roses, while their *Head* is Crowned with Thorns. But being unwilling to insist upon such high Matters, I shall content my self to set down four or five Rules to be observed, which seem to me both Reasonable and Christian.

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Man not being able to support himself in a continual Labour, nor keep his Mind always bent, a little Relaxation and some honest Divertisement may very well be allowed him. This is authorized by the Practice of almost all Ecclesiastical and Religious Communities. They are permitted after Meals to meet and talk together in publick, in order to ease and unbend the Mind as well as the Body. But the Rules I propose are these.

I.

Pleasure is to be used like Food and Sleep, that is, to be taken only through Necessity; for a Christian is not to seek Pleasure for Pleasure's sake, but for some lawful and profitable End; as we Eat not for Eating sake, but to preserve Life, and repair the Strength of the Body weakned by Labour. This Rule condemns all those who make Pleasure and Diversion their Business, and who go to *Work* as the Pious and Vertuous go to *Recreation*, that is to say, but seldom and for a little time.

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We ought not to take Pleasure in excess, any more than Food ; and as we are not to *desire* it but for Necessity, so are we not to *take* it but according to our Need, nor ought we ever so to abandon our selves to it, as to suffer it to absorb and intoxicate our Minds. We must be careful always to remain Masters of our Reason, and never to offend against Christian Modesty and Moderation. The Pagans indeed, who know not God, observe no Bounds, but plunge themselves into all manner of Dissolutions, Drunkenness, Incontinence, and most shameful Debaucheries, in which they take Pleasure ; but such things cannot be admitted among the Disciples of Jesus Christ, who ought always to have God before their Eyes, to rejoyce in him, and live according to his Law.

III.

There are some Pleasures so evidently dangerous to poor sinful Man, and put his Salvation in so great Hazard, that they are not to be
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thought on without Apprehension and Horror. Such are Balls, Plays, Opera's, and other publick Assemblies, where Men and Women meet and entertain one another, with great Liberty and Gallantry, which softens the Soul, poisons it with profane Love, drives away the Holy Ghost, and opens the Heart to all Temptations, where a great deal of Time is lost, and more Money spent in a Month, and sometimes in a Day, than is given to the Poor in a whole Year; where they become a Rock of Scandal to those who see them at such Shews, and to the Comedians, (whose Profession is condemned by the Church) by contributing to their Support, and may be in some manner an occasion of their committing a thousand Crimes. 'Tis almost impossible to avoid sharing in the Corruption of these places, in the Sins that are there committed, and in the Havock the Devil makes; for he reigns there as in his own Empire. How vainly then do many, who presuming upon their own Conduct and Discretion, pretend to frequent

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quent such kind of Diversions without the least Harm or Danger, little considering that besides the Evils they cannot avoid, as Scandal, Loss of Time and Money, and partaking of others Sins, it may be always affirmed with Truth, *That he who loves Danger shall perish therein.* The Example of St. *Alipius*, related by St. *Augustine* in the Eighth Chapter of the Sixth Book of his Confessions, is so terrible, that I need but desire you to read it, to convince you how dangerous are all sorts of publick Shews.

IV.

The last Rule concerning Diversions, is for Penitents, to whom so much ought not to be allowed as to the Just and Innocent. We may justly be deprived of that, which when permitted us, we have abused. More of Mortification and less of Pleasure ought to fall to the Penitents share: and on that account he ought to avoid, as much as he can, all publick Feasts, Entertainments, Meetings, and Worldly Conversations, as Satisfaction too great for him,

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him, and such as he is not worthy of. A true Penitent, who is sensible of the Enormity of his Sins, is willing to enter all he can into the Spirit of the Church, which heretofore used to restrain Penitents the Enjoyment of most things which might render Life pleasant and delightful. He always bears in Mind, that he who has sinned much, ought to weep and suffer much, that Fasting and Tears are essential parts of Penance, and that Pleasure for the most part proves very fatal to him. Having experienced his Weakness perhaps a thousand times, he flies from Pleasure as his most dangerous Enemy, and embraces Penance as the only Plank he dares securely rest upon after so many Shipwracks.

C H A P. XII.

Of Retirement and Recollection.

OF all Counsels, this seems to be the most important and necessary ;

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lary ; *See little, Speak little, go little abroad.* He that quits his Solitude without necessity, is like a Soldier who leaves his Retrenchments, and nakedly exposes himself to the Enemies Fury : he is as a Fish out of Water, in speedy danger of Death. The more Company we converse with, the more we dissipate our Minds. The best Entertainments, when too long and frequent, become offensive to the Soul, because we are apt, through the Corruption of our Nature, to turn every thing into Poison. There is something Contagious in all Mankind, which proceeds from a natural Depravation, and imperceptibly diffuses and communicates it self with wonderful Facility. It was the Saying of an ancient Philosopher, That he never went abroad with Men, but he returned somewhat less a Man : a Christian may say the same ; that every time he converses with the Christians of this Age, he returns less a Christian.

If this may be said even of Spiritual Visits, alas ! how much more
of

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of Worldly Conversations. Truth plainly discovers to us, that the World is the Empire of the Devil, the Kingdom of Pride, Voluptuousness, and of all the Passions, a place of Trouble and Confusion, an Enemy to Truth, and a Persecutor of the Innocent, a Tempestuous Sea, where nothing is to be seen but Shipwrecks, a City infected with the Plague, a Forrest full of Wild Beasts seeking to devour Souls, a Torrent of Fire which sweeps away the greatest part of Mankind: in fine, a perfect Hell, where nothing but Disorder and eternal Horror dwells. Cast but your Eyes a little upon what passes in the World, and you shall observe scarcely any thing else but profane Discourses, reading idle and unlawful Books, frequenting of loose and scandalous Company, nothing to be found but Objects of Temptations, and ill Examples every where. Hardly any Marks of Christianity are left among us. Never was there more Corruption in Families, more Abuses in Wedlock, more Dissolution in Youth, more Ambition among the

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Rich, more Luxury among all sorts of People, more Deceit in Commerce, less Honesty in Merchandizing, more Tricking and Over-reaching among Tradesmen, more Excesses and Debauchery in the common People. Fornication passes with many for a small Fault, and Adultery, a Sin of the highest Nature, for a piece of good Fortune, Flattery and Falshood are taken for good Address, Libertinism and Impiety for Strength of Wit, Oaths and Blasphemies for Ornaments of Language, excessive Gaming for an honest Diversion, Contempt of Conjugal Love, Neglect of Families, and the Education of Children, are accounted as Privileges annexed to Quality and Fortune, Extortion and Usury are looked upon as Means of growing Rich, which none but the Simple and Ignorant would make any scruple of. Is there any thing to be discovered but Interest, Avarice, Passion, Oppression of Truth and Justice, Couzenage, Circumvention and Vanity? Where shall one hear Reason? in a word, may it not more truly be said
now

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now than ever, that *there is neither Truth, nor Mercy, nor Knowledge of God upon the Earth*, Osea 4. 1. *That the World is entirely plunged into Corruption, and into Evil*, 1 John 5. 19. That all who are led by its Maxims, are *abominable and wicked*, Psal. 13. 1. that they will neither do good themselves, nor suffer others to do so. The Spirit of Religion is almost quite extinct in the World; the most Sacred Truths are not regarded, Virtue is grown into Contempt, and the most sincere Devotion is now become the Subject of Raillery.

The World being come to this pass, how much Faith, how much Probity, how much Piety, is requisite to withstand so many Assaults? What Heart so inflamed with Divine Love, that will not grow chill in the midst of so much Ice? what Mind so enlightened, so vigilant and circumspect, that can avoid so many by Roads, escape such subtle Nets, and rescue its self from so many dreadful Dangers? Look upon the World in its Interior, and you shall discover nothing but Pride and Presumption,

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sumption; consider it in its Exterior, and you shall observe only Vanity, Prodigality and Disdain. Now, tell me how is it possible to continue humble and modest among the Proud and Arrogant? how shall we avoid being tainted with the Itch of Honour, while we live with those who make it their God? Who can pretend to dwell among Serpents; Bears and Lyons, without Danger? and who can carry Fire in his Bosom and not be Burnt? Does not the Royal Prophet tell us how fatal 'twas to the Israelites, their Commerce with Strangers? *They mixt themselves among Nations, and they learnt their Works, they adored their Idols, and it became a Scandal to them,* Psal. 105. 35.

The most secure means then to shelter us from all these Evils, is, to betake our selves to a Holy Retirement. 'Tis the very first Instinct of Christian Grace. When God is inclined to shew Mercy to a Soul, *he leads her into Solitude, and there he speaks to her Heart,* Osea 2. 14. 'Tis there he makes his Treaties of Peace

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and Reconciliation with Sinners : and therefore St. Paul hardly ever speaks of God's Elect, but under the Idea of Persons whom he has chosen and separated from the Commerce of the World. *He has cut them, says he, from the natural wild Olive, to engraft them upon the good Olive, Rom. 11. 24. and in another place, He has marked them with his own Character, he has signed them with the Holy Spirit, Eph. 1. 13. Contristate not this Holy Spirit of God, in which you are signed unto the Day of Redemption, Ibid 4. 30. After which he says, Bear not the Yoke with Infidels, for what Participation hath Justice with Iniquity? what Society is there between Light and Darkness? what Agreement between Christ and Belial? what has the Faithful to do with the Infidel? and what Relation has the Temple of God with Idols? Wherefore go out of the midst of them, and separate your selves, says our Lord, and touch not the unclean, 2 Cor. 6. 13.*

The Gospel no less clearly points out to us this Holy Separation, and our Saviour every where represents his Disciples

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Disciples as Men whom he has separated from the World. *If you were of the World, the World would love you; but because you are not of the World, and that I have chosen you out of the World, therefore the World hates you,* John 15. 18. He repeats the same thing in that admirable Prayer which he made after the Last Supper. *O Father, says he, I have manifested thy Name to those whom thou gavest me out of the World; I have given them thy Word, and the World hath hated them, because they are not of the World, as I also am not of the World,* Ibid 17. 6. Are not these Words of St. John to the same purpose? Children, love not the World, nor the things that are in the World; because if any one love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him, 1 John 2. 15. Is it not also what the Apostle commands, when he says, *Conform not to this World,* Rom. 12. 2. *Use this World as if you used it not; the World ought to be crucified and dead to us, and we to the World,* Gal. 6. 14. That while we are in the Body, we are Pilgrims from God, and as it were in a strange Country,

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2 Cor. 5. 6. *That we are dead, and our Life is hidden with Christ in God, and when Christ your Life shall appear, then you also shall appear with him in Glory,* Col. 3. 3. *I conjure you, says St. Peter, to abstain from Carnal Desires, which make War against the Soul, reflecting that you are as Strangers and Travellers in this World,* 1 Pet. 2. 12. Does not St. James make Religion chiefly consist in *visiting the Widow and the Orphan, and preserving ones self from the Corruption of the World?* Jam. 2. 12.

Learn then from all these Passages the Necessity of Retirement; separate your selves from the World: *Go out from Babylon you who are my People, says the Lord, that you partake not of her Sins, and receive not of her Plagues,* Apoc. 18. 4. *Go, my People, enter into your Chambers, shut your Doors upon you, be hid a little for a moment, till the Indignation pass,* Isa. 26. 20. Quit Earth for Heaven: Renounce the Conversations of Men, to enjoy the Company of Jesus Christ. You know his Delights are to be with you, and is it possible that it should

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should not be yours to be with him? 'Tis true, he would have you alone to himself; he is jealous of your Heart, and fears the World will rob him of some part on't: and ought not you to esteem it a Happiness to be able to possess even in this Life, by Faith and Love, him in whom the Angels in Heaven place their supreme Felicity? Converse not with the World without an absolute Necessity. And that you may know how to behave your selves when you are engaged with so formidable an Enemy, hear what I have to say to you on this Subject.

C H A P. XIII.

*How to behave ones self in making
or receiving Visits.*

THE Great Rule for all true Christians, in their Commerce with the World, is *Necessury*. 'Tis never Humor, but Reason, calls them abroad. Now, there are two

sorts of *Necessity*, one real, which proceeds from Business, and the other of Decency, grounded upon certain Duties of Civility and Respect, agreed on and established among all People. When 'tis real, and important Business obliges you to go out, perform it with all Simplicity and Confidence, because God seldom abandons those to Temptations, who expose not themselves to Danger, but by his Order. *He will not suffer you, says St. Paul, to be tempted above your Strength, but will bring you out of Temptation with Advantage,* 1 Cor. 10. 13.

As for Visits of Civility, it will be convenient to make 'em sometimes, rather than scandalize the Weak, but it is good to lessen and shorten them as much as you can. You no sooner begin to make some Figure in the World, but you are exposed to a Croud of Visits, which if you'll give way to, and think of returning 'em all, you have need of no other Business; and then take care of falling under that Press and Weight of Temporal Affairs, which
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St. Bernard declares are very apt to harden the Heart. Rather venture to displease the World, than wound your own Soul, by contristating the Holy Spirit; and call to mind here what our Saviour threatned *to those that should be ashamed of him, that he would be ashamed of them*, Luke 9. 26. and that *whoever renounces not all that he has, cannot be his Disciple*, Ibid 14. 33.

Before you go abroad to Visit, I advise you to make a Moments Prayer, to beg of God to go along with you, and to preserve you from the Corruption of the World: offer yourself entirely to him, and make frequent Resolutions to live faithfully in his Service, telling him with the Prophet, *I am thine, my Divine Saviour, and for ever will be so; I am thy Servant, I have sworn, and am resolved to keep thy Law: direct my Steps in the way of thy Commandments, that no Injustice rule over me.* Imagine you are going upon a Sea extreemly infested with Pirates, or walking in a Forrest full of Wild Beasts: say sometimes in your Heart, I am now

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going into an infected place, I ought to be upon my Guard. And when you come nigh where you are to Visit, raise up your Heart on high, whence you are to expect Succour, and say, Lord, make haste to help me, Psal. 120. Behold me here like to be engaged in vain Discourses, which must needs afflict a Heart that truly loves thee. Alas! you'll hardly ever hear God spoke of in the World, unless it be to profane him. Your Entertainment commonly is either News, Modes, profane Learning, or your Neighbour's Actions; and I doubt there are very few Conversations held but at the Expence of some ones Reputation that is absent, and who very likely is doing the same thing himself in another place. Now, what are you to do in these sad Circumstances, but to observe what the Holy Ghost tells you by the Mouth of the Wise Man? *Look to your selves, set a Watch upon your Hearing, because the place where you walk is slippery, and capable to overthrow you. But when you shall hear such like Discourses, give no more Ear to them, than to things that*

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that you see in a Dream, Eccl. 13. 16, 17. Have Recourse to God for your Deliverance, and say to him with the Prophet, Alas! how is my Banishment prolonged? how weary is my Soul with staying so long in places where my God is not known? where my God is not beloved? Psal. 119. 5.

When your Visit is over, return into your Closet and Pray, to the end that the Idea's of what you have seen and heard may the more speedily vanish. Observe this Conduct; and neither the World nor the Devil shall ever hurt you: and their seducing Power, which sweeps away such a number of Souls, shall not affect you. All cannot betake themselves to Retirement and Solitude; some are obliged to live and converse in the World: such are the Children of the Heavenly *Hierusalem*, who are banished for a time into *Babylon*, for the greater encrease of their Vertue, and that they may be without Spot in the midst of a corrupt Generation, among whom they may shine as Stars in a dark Night, Phil. 2. 15. Now, 'tis sufficient for such as are under this

Necessity, that they conform not to the Spirit of the World, and that detesting its pernicious Maxims, they act upon better Principles, and follow quite different Rules. It sufficeth for the generality of Christians, that they observe St. Paul's Command, *of using the World as if they used it not*, 1 Cor. 7. 31. that they live as retired as they can, that they Pray often, that *they place their whole Affection in the Law of the Lord, and fail not to meditate on it Day and Night*, Pf. 1. that they have always the Fear of God before their Eyes, and endeavour to obey him with the utmost Fidelity; that while they converse with Men, they be not forgetful of God; that they love 'em, but without Passion; that they pity and condole their Misfortunes, without rendering themselves also miserable with 'em: that in time of Prayer they endeavour to keep themselves perfectly recollect; that they Eat, Drink, Sleep, Speak, and perform all their Actions only for God; that they expose themselves as little as they can; that they speak little; that all they
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do be done in great Simplicity of Heart, never offending against Honesty, Modesty or good Manners: in fine, that they make appear in all things so much Prudence and Moderation, as that none may have just Cause of blaming their Conduct. They who live in this manner, may stay in the World without Danger of Shipwrack. They sufficiently satisfy the Obligation common to all Christians, of living in Retirement, and may truly pass for Religious Persons. They are not tied to the Rule of any particular Order, but they follow the Gospel, which is the Rule of all Orders; and tho' they have nothing to distinguish 'em in the Eye of the World, yet their Innocence and Sanctity makes them precious in the Sight of God.

C H A P. XIV.

Of the Repentance of the Just.

Repentance is absolutely necessary to Salvation. Christ has declared it in express Terms: *Unless you do Penitance, you shall all perish,* Luke 13. 3. 'Tis a general and positive Decree, which admits not the least Exception: without Repentance, no Salvation: even the Innocent are concerned as well as the Guilty; the Obligation extends to both, tho' for different Reasons, and in a different manner.

Before I speak of the Repentance of Sinners, I shall explain to you what kind of Penitance is required of the Just. Our Saviour set forth the Necessity of Penitance for all sorts of People, when he said to all the World, *If any one will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross daily and follow me. If any one comes to me, and hates not his Father, Mother, Wife, Children, Brothers, Sisters,*

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sters, and even his own Life, cannot be my Disciple. And whoever takes not up his Cross and follows me, cannot be my Disciple. Whoever among you forsakes not all he possesseth, cannot be my Disciple, Luke 9. 24. He taught us the same thing, when he said, *The Kingdom of Heaven suffers Violence, and the Violent bear it away*, Mat. 11. 12. Can the Children of the Bridegroom mourn so long as the Bridegroom is with them? but a time will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast, Ibid 9. 15. and elsewhere, I have given you an Example, that as I have done, so you do also, John 13. 15. and again, *Blessed are the poor in Spirit; blessed are they who mourn; blessed are they who suffer Persecution for Justice; blessed are they who Hunger and Thirst*, Mat. 5.

And to teach us the same Truth, St. Paul says, *They who belong to Christ, have Crucified their Flesh with all its Vices and Concupiscences*, Gal. 5. 24. and he who had his Baptismal-Innocence, says, *That he chastiseth his Body, and brings it into Servitude*, that

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he carries the Marks of our Lord Jesus in his Body, Ibid 6. 17. That he bears always in his Body the Mortification of Jesus, 2 Cor. 4. 10. That he suffers Hunger and Thirst, Nakedness and ill Usage, and is quite spent with Labour and Misery, Ibid 11. 27. The Council of Trent, Sess. 14. also declares the Life of a Christian to be a continual Penance: and we see the Church exempts none from the Obligation of Fasting, Abstinence and Watching, which she practiseth throughout the Year.

If you ask me why the Scripture and the Church thus condemn the Innocent to Penance, which seems only necessary for Sinners, and is called by the Saints the only Plank remaining to save the Shipwrack'd? I answer, it is for three important Reasons.

The first is, the need the Just have of it; the second is, the Compassion and Charity they ought to have for Sinners, and the third is, the Example of Jesus Christ.

The Just have need of Penance, not to expiate the Sins which they never

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never committed, but that they may not commit them, to prevent the Rebellion of the Flesh, to suppress the Assaults of this Domestick Enemy, which torments and persecutes us; for the *Flesh hath Desires contrary to those of the Spirit*, Gal. 5. 17. *The Spirit indeed is willing, but the Flesh is weak*, Mat. 26. 41. The Spirit carries us upward, but the Flesh plucks us down again: alas! that which we would, we do not; and oftentimes that which we would not, that we do. We cannot in the least pamper or favour this miserable Body of ours, but presently it revolts, and attempts to deliver up the Soul to its Enemies: and for that Reason the Saints have always declared War against it, and refused it all its unreasonable Demands, knowing, that they who live according to the Flesh, hasten their own Death; and that there is no preserving the Life of the Soul, but by the Death of the old Man.

But if the Just had nothing to fear from themselves, yet the Compassion they ought to have for their Brethren,
and

and the Concern they must needs be in, to see the Majesty of God so daily dishonoured by Sin, cannot but oblige them to mourn and do Pen-
nance. If one of the Members of our Body be in Pain, all the rest suffer with it. Now, we make altogether one Body in Christ, and are all of us Members of each other; Rom. 12. 5. As then all the Members are solicitous for the Cure of that which is Wounded, as the Eye beholds it with Compassion, and discovers the Depth of the Wound, as the Hand is ready to offer its Assistance, as the Tongue fails not to ask and pray for Remedy: so when any of the Faithful are Wounded by Sin, the Just ought to sigh, weep, afflict and mortify themselves, and solicit Heaven for their Recovery. For if Christ has paid a Debt which he owed not, - if he suffered from his Youth all sorts of Labour and Hardship for our sakes, if he was willing to be Wounded for our Iniquities, and Broken for our Sins, and to see fall upon himself the Punishment which was to procure our Peace, that by his Stripes we might be made whole, Isa. 53. 5.

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Ought not we to imitate this infinite Charity, and join our Sufferings with his, to procure the Conversion of our Brethren?

The third Reason that obliges the Righteous to do Penance, is, that they ought to follow the Example of Jesus Christ, *and to accomplish in their Flesh what is wanting in his Sufferings*, Col. 1. 24. not but that our Saviour did perfectly accomplish all he was to suffer in his Natural Body, and most truly said, *expiring on the Cross, All is consummated*, John 19. 30. St. Paul nevertheless says, *I accomplish in my Flesh what is wanting in the Sufferings of Jesus Christ*, to instruct us, that Jesus Christ has another Body besides that which was Nailed to the Cross, and that this Body is the Church, of which every one of the Faithful is a Member. He suffered in his Natural Body only during his Life, which was Three and Thirty Years, but he has suffered in his Mystical Body from the beginning of the World, and so is like to suffer in it to the end; for which Reason St. John calls him *the Lamb which was slain*

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slain from the beginning of the World, Apoc. 13. 8. He was Sacrificed in *Abel* and in *Isaac*; he was Persecuted in *Noah*, in *Abraham*, in *Jacob*, in *Joseph*, in *Moses*, and in all the Just Persons of the *Old Testament*. He has suffered in all the Martyrs of his Church, and will suffer to the Consummation of the World, in all those who shall be Persecuted for Justice: this made the same *St. John* say, *That he saw in the midst of the Throne a Lamb as it were slain,* Apoc. 5. 6. The Sufferings then of *Jesus Christ* being not yet at an end, it is fit the Just should consent to be Crucified, that the Mystical Passion of our Lord may be continued. He entered not into his Glory but by the Cross; and none shall enter into it by Pleasures. *We are,* says *St. Paul,* *the Heirs of God, and Co-heirs of Jesus Christ*; provided always that we suffer with him, to the end that we be glorified with him, *Rom. 2. 17.*

But what sort of Penance, do you say, ought a Just Soul to undergo, who has preserved her Baptismal-Innocence; all the World agree it ought

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ought not to be so hard and severe as that of Sinners? It consists, 1. In refraining from all such Pleasures as too strongly move the Soul, and render it less apt for Pious Exercises. 2. In Suffering, with an humble Submission to the Orders and Appointments of God, all the Troubles and Afflictions of this Life, which are neither few nor a little bitter. 3. In performing with Fervour all that the Church commands, in assisting often at the Divine Office, in the exact Observance of all Fasts, in frequent Prayer, in giving Alms, pardoning Injuries, loving his Enemies, and doing Good for Evil. 4. In living retiredly, as we have already said. 5. In Working and taking Pains about something that may be profitable either for the Body or Mind. 6. In serving the Poor. 7. In denying himself all manner of Delicacies in Eating, Drinking and Soft-lying. 8. In avoiding all extravagant Finery and Costliness in his Cloths and other Moveables. 9. In keeping a Watch over all his Senses, that they may not go astray and

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and fix on dangerous Objects. Every one may add to these what his Devotion shall inspire him, provided he go not so far as to destroy his Health. For I find St. *Augustine* gives that Rule in his Letter to *Proba*.
 ‘ Think not your self happy, says he
 ‘ to that Illustrious Lady, because
 ‘ you have wherewith to purchase all
 ‘ the Delights and Pleasures of this
 ‘ Life, and possess all things in great
 ‘ abundance. Look upon ’em all
 ‘ with contempt, and be content to
 ‘ take only what is necessary to pre-
 ‘ serve your Health ; for you are ob-
 ‘ liged to have regard to the Necessi-
 ‘ ties of Life, and when the Apostle
 ‘ forbids us to content our Flesh, ’tis
 ‘ only as to what regards the con-
 ‘ tenting our Sensuality. For the rest,
 ‘ says he, we shall wonderfully
 ‘ strengthen our Prayers, if we add
 ‘ to ’em Fasting and other Mortifica-
 ‘ tions, which are excellent Helps
 ‘ for the cutting off all Concupi-
 ‘ scences whatsoever ; tho’ in these,
 ‘ Care is to be had, that Health be
 ‘ not destroyed.

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But tho' the Just should not practise so great Corporal Austerities, yet they are no less obliged than Penitents to the interior Mortification of the Will, which consists in overcoming their Passions, in being humble, meek, patient, charitable, and disengaged from all Earthly things.

C H A P. XV.

Of the Repentance of Sinners.

I Shall not speak to Sinners as to the Just. I'll not deceive them: *I won't lay Pillows under their Heads, nor Cushions under their Elbows; to lull them into the Sleep of Sin, Ezek. 13. 18.* I shall not promise them what the Gospel has not promised. I won't tell 'em they shall be saved without Repentance, or that a slender superficial one will serve their turn. On the contrary, I'll tell them with the Gospel; *Do worthy Fruits of Penitance, Mat. 3. 8.* that is to say, let your Penitance be proportioned

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portioned to your Sins; for whoever is so unhappy as even by one Mortal Sin, to loose his Baptismal-Grace, it must cost him many a Tear, and much Sorrow and Pains, before he can recover it again, as the Holy Council of *Trent* has declared. I shall say to them with the Prophet, *Rend your Hearts, and not your Garments.* *Return to the Lord with all your Heart, and testify the Sincerity of your Conversion by your Fastings, by your Tears, and by your Sighs,* Joel 2. 12. *Put on Sack-cloth, cover your selves with Ashes. Imitate by the Violence of your Sighs, and Bitterness of your Tears, the Lamentations and Cries of a Mother that has lost her Son,* Jer. 6. 26. I'll declare to them with our Saviour, *Except you do Pennance you shall all perish,* Luke 13. 3. If you ask me what it is to do Pennance, *Tertullian* will answer you: 'Repentance is a Mistress that teaches the Sinner the Art of humbling himself, that prescribes the Life he ought to lead to appease the Wrath of God, that takes care to regulate him even to his Diet and Apparel,

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orders him to be always clothed in Sack-cloth and Ashes, to neglect his Body, and not to be concerned for its being Dirty, to let all his Concern and Trouble of Mind proceed from an extream Regret and Resentment of his Sins, to think of 'em every Day with Tears, to be diligent in correcting them, to feed upon Bread and Water, to nourish his Prayers by continual Fasts, to sigh, lament and cry Night and Day before Almighty God. But this Repentance all hideous as I have Painted it, is that which exalts the Sinner whom it humbles, justifies him whom it obliges to a Self-accusation, and absolves while it condemns. In a word, God will be so much the more favourable to you, as you shall be more severe to your self. St. Cyprian will tell you they deceive you who affirm, that a wounded Soul is of easy and cheap Cure, that to pretend to absolve you before being fully satisfied of your Repentance, were to give you a false Peace, a dreadful and dangerous Peace, since it is

' is written, *Remember from whence*
 ' *you are fallen, and do Penitance.* To
 ' give a rash and hasty Absolution,
 ' says this Great Saint, is not to cure
 ' a Sinner, 'tis to kill him, 'tis to
 ' deprive him of the Benefit and
 ' Hope of eternal Salvation, 'tis cut-
 ' ting the Tree by the Root, 'tis
 ' dashing the Vessel against Rocks
 ' to hinder its ever coming into Port;
 ' 'tis throwing headlong those that
 ' are already fallen, to render their
 ' Ruin irreparable. Sinners are ob-
 ' liged to suffer a just time of Pen-
 ' nance for Crimes of a less Nature
 ' than Idolatry, Fornication or A-
 ' dultery; and long Proofs are re-
 ' quired for their Reconciliation.
 ' With how much more Reason then
 ' ought great and heinous Sins to be
 ' so treated? St: *Ambrose* will tell
 ' you, that to be truly penitent, we
 ' are to renounce the World, to al-
 ' low less time for Sleep than Nature
 ' requires, to awake every Night
 ' with Tears, to break our Rest with
 ' Sighs, and to pass a great part of it
 ' in Prayer. In a word, to live in
 ' such a manner, as to die to a sen-
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‘fual and worldly Life, to deny our
‘selves, and to be entirely chan-
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‘I would have, says he, the Guil-
‘ty hope for Pardon of his Sins, but
‘upon Condition that he ask it with
‘Tears, and procure also the Peoples
‘Tears to join with him in his Peti-
‘tion; and tho’ he should be twice
‘or thrice refused to be received into
‘the Communion of the Church,
‘and to be admitted to the Sacra-
‘ments, I would have him impute
‘it to the Weakness of his Repen-
‘tance, and his own want of Merit;
‘let him redouble his Tears, and his
‘Austerities; let him go again and
‘cast himself at the Feet of the
‘Faithful; let him embrace them,
‘kiss them, and bathe them with
‘his Tears; let him prevail with
‘Christ to say of him as he said of
‘the sinful Woman in the Gospel;
‘*Many Sins are forgiven her, because*
‘*she hath loved much,* Luke 7. 47. I
‘have known Penitents, who with
‘the Violence of Weeping, have
‘quite disfigured their Faces, who,
‘with the continual trickling of
G ‘Tears,

‘ Tears, have wore Furrows in their
 ‘ Cheeks, who have lain almost per-
 ‘ petually prostrate on the Ground,
 ‘ overjoy’d to be trodden under Foot,
 ‘ who have become so pale and bro-
 ‘ ken with Fasting, that one might
 ‘ see Death in their Faces.

‘ *St. Chrysostome* will tell you, that
 ‘ Repentance is a laborious Baptism,
 ‘ the only Plank remaining after
 ‘ Shipwrack, a temporary Hell, a
 ‘ wholesome Torment, a Commerce
 ‘ of Grief and Pain, a Sacrifice of
 ‘ continual Tears. *St. Augustine* de-
 ‘ clares Sin can never go unpunish-
 ‘ ed, either you must destroy it by
 ‘ Repentance, or God will destroy it
 ‘ by his Justice. If you are severe to
 ‘ your self, God will be favourable
 ‘ to you. To change your Life, is
 ‘ not sufficient, nor to forsake your
 ‘ sinful ways ; besides this, you are
 ‘ to satisfy God’s Justice by Acts of
 ‘ Pennance, by humble Sighs, by
 ‘ the Compunction of a contrite
 ‘ Heart, and by Alms-deeds. The
 ‘ true Penitent has nothing else in
 ‘ view but that the Evil he has done
 ‘ may not go unpunished, and the

‘ less

‘ less he forgives himself, the more
‘ Assurance he has of Pardon from
‘ him, whom if any one despise, he
‘ shall not escape his just and terrible Judgements.

‘ A Soul, says St. *Jerome*, that is
‘ truly sensible of the Greatness of
‘ her Crimes, seeks nothing more
‘ than to embrace the Works of Pen-
‘ nance ; she says to her Physician,
‘ The Depth of my Wounds requires
‘ both the Knife and the Fire, burn
‘ my Flesh, lay open my Sores, spare
‘ me not, put a stop to my evil In-
‘ clinations, by the Bitterness of
‘ Pennance : ’tis I have wounded
‘ my self with my own Hands, and
‘ therefore ’tis I ought now to suffer
‘ the Pain, the Incisions, and all the
‘ Torments necessary for my Cure.

‘ St. *Pacianus* tells you, That Pen-
‘ nance consists in the Mortification
‘ of the Flesh, in the Retrenching of
‘ Pleasures, in the Contempt of
‘ Riches, and in a continual Labour.
‘ That to cut off from Pennance La-
‘ bour and Tears, is absolutely to
‘ destroy it : that it would be to en-
‘ courage Men to relapse into their

' Sins, if Pennance were become a
 ' Sport and Pastime. No, no, says
 ' this Holy Father, assure your selves
 ' Pennance is not a Sport ; to Cru-
 ' cify the Flesh, to Sigh and Weep
 ' continually, cannot be accounted
 ' Pastimes.

' 'Tis said by an ancient Author,
 ' whose Works are attributed to St.
 ' *Augustine*, That a Penitent ought
 ' never to perswade himself that he
 ' has done enough to obtain Mercy :
 ' let him, says he, always retain be-
 ' fore God a secret Shame for his
 ' Faults, and let not his Grief and
 ' Sufferings finish but with his Life.
 ' The Apostle every Day bewailed
 ' the Sins which he knew were re-
 ' mitted him in Baptism : and ought
 ' not we then to abandon our selves
 ' to Sighs and Tears, on which is
 ' founded all our Hope ?

' St. *Cesarius* tells you, whoever is
 ' guilty of Mortal Sins, must expiate
 ' them by Tears, Sighs, continual
 ' Fasts, and great Alms-deeds.

' It avails nothing, says St. *Grego-*
 ' *ry* the Pope, to declare ones Sins to
 ' a Priest, if this Confession be not
 ' followed

‘ followed with Works of Pennance :
‘ none ought to be lookt upon as true
‘ Converts, but such as having own-
‘ ed their Faults, endeavour to can-
‘ cel them by proportionable Acts
‘ of Pennance ; as the Son of God,
‘ says he, once cursed the Tree that
‘ bore no Fruit, altho’ it flourished
‘ with beautiful Leaves ; so he re-
‘ jects the bare Appearance and For-
‘ mality of Confession, without the
‘ Fruits of Pennance : as he who has
‘ borrowed great Sums, discharges
‘ not his Debts by ceasing to borrow
‘ more ; so a Sinner appeases not the
‘ Wrath of God, by ceasing to live
‘ ill : he ought to declare War a-
‘ gainst Pleasures, and give himself
‘ up to Tears and Grief ; not that
‘ God delights to see us in Pain and
‘ Misery, but because the Diseases of
‘ the Soul are not to be cured but by
‘ their contrary Remedies ; so that
‘ they who have sinned in the Pur-
‘ suit of unlawful Pleasures, ought
‘ to deny themselves even those which
‘ are lawful ; and they who have
‘ been bewitched with the Sweets of
‘ of Carnal Delights, cannot be cu-

‘red but by the Bitterness of Pen-
‘ nance.

‘Hear *St. Bernard* : If a Penitent,
‘ says he, had but the Eyes of his
‘ Heart cleared, so as to discover and
‘ comprehend the Enormity of a
‘ Mortal Sin, not one morsel of Bread
‘ should come within his Mouth, but
‘ what he had first moistened with
‘ his Tears ; nor will a true Penitent
‘ refuse to do any thing that he is
‘ told may be capable of appeasing
‘ the Wrath of God.

‘*St. Thomas* says true Repentance
‘ is never at an end ; it makes in the
‘ Heart of a converted Sinner, a
‘ Wound which never closeth but at
‘ his Death ; every time his Sins come
‘ into his Thoughts, he sighs, he
‘ grieves, he trembles, and imagines
‘ he sees the Torrents of God’s Anger
‘ ready to pour down upon him.

‘The Council of *Trent* declares,
‘ That it would not suit with God’s
‘ Justice to remit the Sins committed
‘ after Baptism, as easily as those
‘ committed before, since Ignorance
‘ may lessen the latter, while a thou-
‘ sand things serve to heighten the
‘ former.

‘former. When after Baptism we
‘fall, when after having known the
‘way of Truth, and tasted the Gift
‘of God, we fear not to trample it
‘under Foot, to violate his Temple
‘in us, to extinguish the Holy Spirit
‘in our Hearts; we must not pre-
‘tend to to be restored again to our
‘former happy State, but by much
‘Sorrow, Pains and Tears; so that
‘’tis not without Cause the Holy
‘Fathers have called Pennance a la-
‘borious Baptism. This Council
‘therefore orders all Confessors to im-
‘pose such Pennances on Sinners as
‘may bear some Proportion with
‘the Greatness of their Crimes. It
‘declares, That they who enjoin but
‘small Satisfaction for great Faults,
‘make themselves Partners in the
‘Sins of their Penitents: that Pen-
‘nances ought to be somewhat se-
‘vere, in order to keep up Disci-
‘pline: that our evil Habits are to
‘be rooted out by Actions contrary
‘to our Vices: that ’tis by Works
‘of Pennance we may appease
‘God’s Indignation, and render our
‘selves conformable to Jesus Christ

' Crucified, in remaining with him
' fastened upon the Cross.

'Twould be endless to set down here all that the Saints have said on the Obligation of doing Pennance, and if I added their Examples, I should cover with Shame and Confusion the greatest part of the Christians of our Time, who are so bold and forward to Sin, and so slack to do Pennance. You who read this Instruction, I conjure you imitate them not: fly and save your selves from this corrupt Generation; avoid the Deluge of Evils wherewith you are threatned by the Justice of God, unless you be converted. Do Pennance while you may, and do it effectually, as you ought. Spare not that miserable Flesh which has engaged you in so many Disorders. It has taken full Draughts of sensual Delights; now let it drink proportionably of the bitter Cup of Sorrow; let its Entertainments be Fastings, Watchings, Hair-Shirts, Labour, Retirement, Alms-Deeds, and all that may satisfy the Justice of your provoked Judge. Kill not your Body,
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but spare it not : Indiscretion in the Practice of Christian-Mortification, is to be avoided ; but on the other ' hand, hearken not too easily to the *Prudence of the Flesh*, because it is not *subject to the Law of God*, neither can it be, Rom. 8. 7. Reason corrupted becomes too favourable to Self-love, to be Judge between an offended God and a loose Sinner. She is apt to condemn, in following her own Lights, that which she would otherwise approve, could she consult Truth, and follow the Guidance of the Holy Spirit. Remember always, that Penitence holds here the place of God's Justice ; he's pleased to put his Interests into the Hands of the Penitent, and to make him Judge in his own Cause ; but 'tis upon Condition that he Judges rigorously, and according to the Laws of that eternal Justice, which demands of Sinners a Satisfaction proportioned to their Crimes.

But you are to take notice for your Comfort, that all the Crosses, Disappointments and Disgraces you meet with in the World, Poverty,

Sickness, Infirmities, painful, laborious Exercises, a regular, uniform Life, tho' less austere, a Life of Retirement and Prayer, the avoiding occasions of Sin: in a word, the living only for God, whether in the Practice of Corporal Austerities, or that your Strength is not able to undergo them, are all so many means of performing an excellent Penitance in the Eyes of him who judgeth us by our Heart, and by our Love, rather than by our exterior Works.

C H A P. XVI.

of C O N F E S S I O N.

IF you are not already provided with a good Book of Instructions for Confession and Communion, you may read what follows. I shall not take Pains to set forth the great Advantages of Confession, since I cannot suppose any so ignorant as not to know them: they know it is of
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right Divine, and that Jesus Christ established the Necessity of it, in giving to the Church the Power of retaining and remitting Sins; and the general Practice of all who have any regard to Piety, discovers to us so much the Importance of it, that 'tis needless to dwell longer on this Point. I will rather observe to you, that altho' Confession is a thing much sought after, and frequently practised by many who seem to have a Concern for their Salvation, yet we see it not produce all the Fruit that ought to be expected from it. The Reason must be, because they come not to it rightly prepared; for Confession is an exteriour Practice, which produceth nothing, unless it be accompanied with certain interiour Dispositions, set down in the Scripture: the first is a sincere Regret and Compunction for the Sins we confess. The second is a firm Resolution to correct and amend them. 'Tis plain these two Dispositions are of absolute necessity; for 'tis impossible that God shall pardon a Sin which the Sinner does not detest.

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test. So long as the Love of our Sins remains in us, so long likewise does the Guilt ; nor can all the Confessing in the World discharge us of it. This is a certain Truth, especially as to Mortal Sins. Whoever continues in the Habit of any one Mortal Sin, is both incapable and unworthy of receiving Absolution. Wherefore look to't, when you go to Confession, search well your Heart, examine your Conscience, see that you be thoroughly converted, least, instead of gaining Absolution, you add to your other Sins that of Sacrilege : while therefore you find your Heart engaged in Vice, or in any Action contrary to the Law of God, it were better for you ~~not~~ to confess, than by Confession, do like the Man who pretended to scour the Bricks, sully your self the more. When I speak of Confessing, I mean so as to receive Absolution : for we may in any Condition or Circumstance address our selves to a Priest, discover to him our Interiour, demand his Advice, and beg the Help of his Prayers : but we are never to receive Absolution,

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Absolution, unless we be truly penitent for our Sins, and have a sincere Will to amend them. Now, 'tis easily perceptible when the Heart is thus disposed. The *Works* of a truly converted Soul presently make it known. The real Penitent is solicitous to shake off his sinful Habits; and he that is not, gives one a Right to suspect his Conversion. Not but that one may after Repentance fall again, but yet not so easily, nor so often; so that it may still be affirmed with Truth, that while we perceive no Amendment in a Sinner, we cannot suppose him converted. I don't believe there are many Saints to be found in Heaven who have been guilty of falling often into the same Sins, and have done Pennance many times for the same Crimes, and whose Lives have been a Circle of Confessions and Relapses. Therefore I advise you, if you are in Mortal Sin, to present your self to a Priest without delay, in order to receive from him your Pennance. There is a particular Blessing attends the Respect and Submission shewn to the

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the Ministry of Priests. Do nothing but by the Advice of a prudent Confessor: take the time that he shall judge fit to prove the Sincerity of your Conversion. Labour to cut off all your vicious Habits, and to render your self worthy to be reconciled with your Creator. Seek out for a Confessor one who has not less Knowledge than Zeal, less Prudence than Charity; one who is neither too favourable and easy, nor yet unreasonably severe, who knows how to compassionate your Weaknesses without encouraging them, who exacts from you worthy Fruits of Penance, yet makes them not consist altogether in restraining you from the Holy Communion, since the Consequence would not prove less dangerous, than by permitting you to approach it too soon.

As to Venial Sins, you may follow your own Devotion, and the general Custom of all Pious Persons, who make frequent Confession of them. 'Tis true, they were not commonly confessed in the first Ages of the Church; yet the Practice is nevertheless

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theless very good and commendable, altho' it be of later Date, nor is it the only one that ought to be esteemed and retained, tho' new. How many Prayers and Ceremonies have been added to the Liturgy, which were not prescribed by the Apostles? When a thing is good, it matters not in what time it was begun; all we have to do, is, to make use of it. But if you are desirous to make the Confession of your Venial Sins profitable to you, take care to go duly prepared, and let not Custom be your chief Motive. Remember always, that Penance is a Sacrament, and that there is nothing so pernicious as to profane it. Now, every time you go to Confession without Contrition, without any desire of Amendment, and without Devotion, so often you profane it. 'Tis true indeed, that the frequent relapsing into Venial Sins, is not always an assured Mark that the Sorrow pretended in Confession was either false or weak, nor consequently that the Confession was invalid; for Venial Sins proceeding from a Weakness which

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which the Sacraments do not suddenly nor entirely take away, the Contrition may be good, altho' afterwards they fall again. But this Truth destroys not that which I advanced in the beginning of this Chapter, *viz.* That we can never obtain Pardon of the least Sin so long as we love it, and repent not of it; for that Love of Sin being contrary to the Law of Nature, and to the Order God has established in the World, 'tis impossible that God can approve and pardon it while we strive not against it, because it is impossible that God should love Disorder; and it were to love it, to suffer the voluntary Disorders of a Heart, which being made for God, loves something else, without regard to God. You are to be careful then not to confess your Venial Sins without you conceive a Sense of Sorrow for them, lest you loose the Benefit of the Sacrament, and instead of cleansing your Soul, you sully it the more. But that which may serve to comfort us in these Dangers, is, that God is satisfied with our Grief, altho' small,

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small, provided it be real and sincere, and that it fall at least upon some one of the Venial Sins we confess. When you find your self subject to any particular Failing, you may acquaint your Confessor with it, not as a Fault for which you ask Absolution, but as a Disease for which you seek Remedy. But this being a Matter of great Importance, we shall treat of it more largely in the Rules that we shall give upon frequent Communion.

C H A P. XVII.

Of the Devotion to the Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

WE are now come to the most tender and most august Object of the Worship of the Catholick Church. The Happiness of the Saints in Heaven, is, to see God Face to Face, and Jesus Christ his Son. The Happiness of Christians, during their Warfare upon Earth, is, to possess

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possess him in the Divine Sacrament of our Altars, and to be as much assured that he is in the midst of us, as we are assured that he is in Heaven. If this Treatise were only to be read by the ancient Catholicks, I should say nothing to establish the Faith of this Myſtery ; but hoping it may not be unprofitable to some new Converts, whom the Hand of God has brought back into the Fold of his Holy Church, by ways no less adorable than they are extraordinary, I think it will not be amiss briefly to observe here, that our Devotion to the Holy Sacrament of the Altar is grounded upon our Belief that Jesus Christ is there in his own Person : and this Belief is grounded upon his Promises, upon the Words of the Institution of this Divine Sacrament, upon the Authority of *St. Paul*, upon the Testimony of all the Saints, upon the Consent of all People, upon the Decision of Councils, and upon the Excellence of the Church above the Synagogue. Our Saviour promised in the 6th Chapter of *St. John*, *That he would give his Flesh to eat, and his Blood*

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Blood to drink, that the Bread which he should give was the same Body that was to be delivered to Death; that his Flesh was Meat indeed, and his Blood Drink indeed: that the Bread which he would give, was more excellent than the Manna given to the Jews, since the Jews eat Manna and died; but he that should eat of this Bread which came down from Heaven, should live for ever. As he so often and so expressly repeated the same thing, the Jews believed he really designed to give them his Flesh to eat, and his Blood to drink. And surprized with this strange Proposition, they began to ask one another how that could be: How, say they, can this Man give us his Flesh to eat? Now, had they mistaken our Saviour's Meaning, he would certainly have explained himself, and told them he pretended not to speak of his real Body, but real Bread, which should be the Figure of his Body: for it is unworthy the Idea we have of our Saviour's Goodness, to believe that he would lay Snare to entrap Men, and propose Mysteries in Terms, which unless explained, must lead

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to Error. Let us see then how he explains them, and what he answers to the *Jews* Question : *How can this Man give us his Flesh to eat ?* Jesus told them, *Verily, verily I say to you, unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, you shall not have Life in you : he that eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood, remains in me, and I in him. As my Father living sent me, and I live by my Father, so he that shall eat me, shall also live by me.* That is to say, it is as true that you shall eat me, as it is true that my Father sent me ; and it is as true that you shall live by me, as it is true that I live by my Father.

You see plainly, that our Saviour did not dispossess the *Jews* of the Notion they had, that he proposed to them his real Body to eat, and his real Blood to drink. They were scandalized at his Discourse, they murmured, and even several of his Disciples took thence occasion to quit him, and would follow him no longer : yet notwithstanding that, he altered not his Language ; he only added, that his Words were *Spirit*
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and Life, that is to say, they included a *Mystery* which they comprehended not. But if we pass on to the *Execution* of this *Promise* related by three *Evangelists*, we shall find they all agree in delivering the same *Testimony*, viz. *That Jesus Christ took Bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to his Apostles, saying, Take, eat; this is my Body, which shall be delivered for you; and then having taken the Chalice, and given Thanks, he blessed it, and gave it to his Apostles, saying, Drink ye all of this, for this is my Blood, the Blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many, and for the Remission of Sins.* In all this here is not one word of *Figure*. All these *Expressions* naturally import the *Doctrine* of the *Church*. *St. Paul* puts no other *Interpretation* upon them: he relates the whole *Story*, and may be termed the fourth *Evangelist*: he learnt it not from the other *Apostles*, nor from any *Man*: 'Tis of our *Lord*, says he, *that I have received the Doctrine which I have taught you concerning the Eucharist*, 1 Cor. 11. 23. he calls it no less than three times the
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Body and Blood of our Lord. He says, *The Chalice of Benediction which we bless, is the Communion of the Blood of Jesus Christ, and the Bread which we break is the Communion of the Body of our Lord: and he that eats this Bread and drinks this Chalice unworthily, is guilty of profaning the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, Ibid 20. 16.* You see upon what the Faith of the Church is grounded, upon the expresse Word of Scripture, which repeats most clearly the same thing, at least fifteen or twenty times, against which nothing can be objected, unless it be that the Eucharist is sometimes called Bread; as if the Water which was changed into Wine at the Marriage of *Cana*, might not still be called Water, even after its Change; as if it might not rightly be said, he that will drink of this Water, shall drink excellent Wine. 'Twas proper enough to call it Water, because it was originally so; and it might very well be called Wine, because it was become so by the Power of Christ. Thus the Eucharist being, as our Saviour calls it, *Meat indeed*

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and Drink indeed, and the true Food of our Souls, it may most properly and truly be called Bread, as Man-na is called in Scripture, the Bread of Heaven.

Moreover, all the Saints, all Ages, all Christian Nations, have believed the Reality of Christ's Presence in the Sacrament, as we do. They have always expounded our Saviour's Words simply, and according to the natural Idea they form in the Mind ; infomuch that when an Archdeacon of *Angers*, thought fit in the eleventh Age to Dogmatise against the universal Belief of the real Presence, all the World condemned him, nor was he able to engage one sole Village in his Error, so deeply was Truth then rooted in the Hearts of all Christians. The *Greek Church*, so long separated from the *Latin*, has always held the same Faith touching the Eucharist ; and when *Zuinglius* and *Calvin* in the last Age attackt the real Presence, they found not one in the World of their Opinion, and were constrained to frame a new Church to oppose the old One ; and even the

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Sect of *Luther*, who had first taught them to revolt, condemned them as the most pernicious of all Hereticks, because they denied the real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

But had we not all these Proofs, the bare Idea the Scripture gives us of the Church and of the Synagogue, is sufficient to make us embrace the Doctrine of the real Presence. It cannot be denied, that according to Scripture, the Church is more tenderly beloved, and more favoured of God than the Synagogue. This is compared to the Servant of *Abraham*, and the Church to the Free Woman, *Gal. 4. 31.* The Synagogue is sent away with her Son, and the Church remains with hers, who is to be the Heir. The one is put to Shame, and the other has the Honour to be chosen Spouse. The one made a Slave, the other a Queen. Hence it plainly follows, that the Church is much to be preferred before the Synagogue. And in Reality, if you look upon the Rise and Origin of one and the other, you'll find all the Advantage on the Church's side. The Syna-
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gogue has *Moses* for its Head and Founder, the Church has *Jesus Christ*. The Synagogue is delivered from the *Egyptian* Bondage, the Church from the Slavery of the Devil. The Immolation of the Paschal Lamb, is the Sign of the Deliverance of the *Jews*, and its Blood preserves them from the Exterminating Angel, and from Death : but in lieu of this Figure, we have the Death of *Jesus Christ* and his precious Blood to purchase our Deliverance, our Redemption and Salvation. The *Jews* are saved by Miracle from the Pursuit of *Pharaoh's Army* ; they pass the *Red Sea* dry-foot, while the *Egyptians* are buried under Water. We have Baptism to answer this Figure, by which we are washed in the Blood of *Christ*, and where all our Sins, like the *Egyptians*, are happily drowned. Hitherto we see the incomparable Privileges of the Church above the Synagogue ; yet some Advantages there are on her side, which were worthy of our Envy, and might seem to place her above the Church, had not the Church that of the Eucharist, so

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infinitely excelling all those of the Synagogue. She had the Ark where God was pleased to dwell in a most particular manner, and to deliver his Oracles; the *Manna* which was a most miraculous Food, and wholly Celestial, both in its Origin and Effects; and the Pasch, the Memory of which was celebrated every Year by the Sacrifice of a Lamb, which was eaten with great Ceremony. I say then, that if we had not Jesus Christ really and truly in the Holy Eucharist, the Synagogue were much happier than the Church, and much better had it been to have lived in the time of *Moses*, than in the time of the Apostles: For if the Eucharist be but the Figure of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, were they not better and more expressly figured in the Paschal Lamb and *Manna*? And if all the Advantage that the Christian has in Communicating, consists in Eating Spiritually the Body and Blood of Christ, that is to say, in that he applies to himself by Faith the Fruit of our Saviour's Death and Passion; had not the *Jews* the same Advantage

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tage in the time of *Moses*? You are to know, says St. Paul, that our Fathers were all under the Cloud, and all passed through the Sea, and all under *Moses* have been Baptized in the Cloud and in the Sea, and all did eat of the same Spiritual Food, and drank of the same Spiritual Drink; and they drank of the Spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ, 1 Cor. 10. 1. They then applied to themselves by Faith, as well as we, the Merits of Jesus Christ, who was to come; and besides this Advantage, they had the Comfort to eat a Food made in Heaven by the Hands of Angels, and every Day distributed to them in a miraculous manner; a Food which they could eat no more of than what was proper for them, and which contained in it all that was pleasing and delicious to the Taste: they drank of pure Water which was made most miraculously to spring from a Rock; they were possessed of an Ark and an Oracle, whence God conducted his People, as a Father does his own Children. There they paid him their Homages and Adorations:

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tions: there they consulted him in all their Doubts, and in all their Enterprizes, and he never failed to answer them, unless when they had provoked him. This Ark was their Sanctuary, and as a Buckler, whereby they became invincible. They carried it at the Head of their Camp: with it they attackt Cities, and overthrew the Walls: with it they passed dry-foot over the River *Jordan*: with it they put their Enemies to Flight; and if their Sins rendred sometimes their Enemies Victorious, as it happened in the time of *Heli* the High Priest, the *Jews* presently sent for the Ark; they received it with great Acclamations of Joy; and the Fame of the Wonders it wrought, were so spread abroad, and so universally known, that the *Philistines* no sooner heard that the Ark was come into the *Jewish* Army, but they were all seized with Fear. *Wo to us now!* say they, *for who is it that can deliver us from the Power of these terrible Gods? these are the Gods that brought so great Plagues to the Egyptians,* 1 *Reg.* 4. 8. Nevertheless, be-
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cause the *Jews* had provoked God by their enormous Crimes, and that the two Sons of the High Priest *Heli* were in the Army, they were overcome, the Ark taken, and all the Glory of *Israel* led in Captivity. But this only happened the better to manifest the Power of God; for the Ark being brought to the Temple of *Dagon*, the Idol of the *Philistines*, it threw it to the Ground: they set it up again in its place, it threw it down a second time, cutting off its Head and Arms. This is not all: God, to revenge this Indignity offered to the Throne of his Glory, struck the *Philistines* with Wounds so very painful, that they sent the Ark back to the *Israelites* with all the speed they could. And how did it chastise their Cities through which it passed? what Bloody Execution did it not do upon the *Bethsamites*, altho' *Jews*, in Punishment of the Irreverence and indiscreet Curiosity, with which they presumed to look upon what they called the *Sanctum Sanctorum*? what Miracles did it not work in the time of *David*? what Fear must he be in,

when he saw a *Levite* struck Dead, for attempting to support it where it seemed to lean a little on one side? what Blessings did it not send upon Happy *Obed-Edom*, with whom it remained three Months? with what Joy, what Zeal, what Reverence, did Holy *David* cause it to be carried into *Jerusalem*? These methinks are extraordinary Favours, and most singular Priviledges: and is it possible that the Spouse of Jesus Christ, which is the Church, should have nothing to recompense the Loss of so many Graces? that her Bridegroom, who had loved her even to Die for her, should quite abandon her at his Ascension into Heaven? No, that is neither possible, nor worthy his infinite Goodness. We have his Promise: he has told us by his Apostles, *Behold, I am with you, even to the Consummation of the World*, Mat. 28. 28. 'Tis Jesus Christ, God and Man, who has promised us this Blessing: it lies then on him to perform it. I grant the Spirit of God would be sufficient, if he so pleased; but since his Divine Majesty has gi-

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ven us a God-Man to be Mediator between him and us, I do maintain he had not sufficiently favoured his Church, had he not left her her Bridegroom in such a manner as the State of this Life permits. We are so happy then to have our dear Redeemer among us. The Holy Eucharist is the Propitiatory, where the two Golden Cherubins are not seen, but where all the Blessed Spirits in Heaven attend. Jesus Christ is upon the Propitiatory, as the Oracle, Manna and Paschal-Lamb of his Church: 'tis there we are to adore him; for Christ being God, deserves our Adorations wherever he is to be found, and in what Form or State soever he is pleased to put himself. The Eucharist is his Throne: *Let us therefore go to it with Confidence, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace in due Season, Heb. 4. 16.* 'Tis a Pulpit whence this Divine Doctor instructs all his Disciples, in Humility, Meekness, Patience, Purity, Charity, and all other Vertues. 'Tis a Mystery of Piety, the Bond of Charity, the Sign of Unity, a Life-giving

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Sacrament, a Spiritual Manna, a Bread all Celestial, the true Nourishment and Support of the faithful Soul. 'Tis the Altar where this Great High Priest, (who is a Priest for ever, according to the Order of *Melchisedec*) immolates every Day the true Paschal Lamb, as a daily Commemoration of the Bloody Sacrifice which he made of himself upon the Cross. So that you have in the Holy Eucharist all that was most august and great among the *Jews*, and you may in Communicating, most rightly say, *My God, and my All.*

See then that you have a tender and ardent Affection for this most adorable Sacrament: keep there your Soul strongly fixed by Faith, and pay your Homages with an humble Piety. Pass not one Day, if possible, without going to Church, to adore there your Saviour; and set apart one Hour every Week to be near the Blessed Sacrament in Meditation and Prayer. If you are in a place where it is exposed every Thursday, you may take that Day to perform this Duty.

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Duty. Fail not to make your Court to this Great King, on whom alone depends your Happiness. O the Blindness of Christians ! See how the Courtiers pass their whole Lives near the Princes of the Earth. How prodigiously assiduous they are ! how many Affronts and Denials they suffer, before they can obtain a miserable Preferment, which is so far from procuring their Happiness, that it most commonly gives Rise to new Troubles and Vexations. The more they are advanced, the more they are exposed to Envy, Detraction and publick Hatred. They esteem it the highest Pitch of Fortune to be the Prince's Favourite ; and when, after Immense Pains and Difficulties, they have gained their Point, there is nothing to be seen but Depths and Precipices, into which every Caprice, Suspicion, ill Success, the Mismanagement of an Intreague, and a thousand Casualties, may throw them every Moment : whereas on the other hand, if we are willing to make Court to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to gain his good Graces,

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to become his Favourites, we are always sure to succeed.

Whenever you are in any Troubles, Doubts, or Difficulties, consult our Lord Jesus concealed in the Sacrament of his Love. Go to the Oracle of the Christian Church : strip your self of all Prejudice : say to him with the same Submission as St. Paul ; *Lord what wouldst thou have me do ?* Acts 9. 6. and with David ; *Shew me the way in which I am to walk : guide my Steps ; and teach me to do thy Will,* Psal. 142. In all your Streights, in all your Temptations, have Recourse to Jesus Christ : the very pronouncing his Name puts the Devils to Flight. Then what will not his most adorable Body do, and this Body, under the Form of a Victim, which has conquered both Death and Hell ? The ancient Church was thoroughly perswaded of this Truth, when she permitted the Primitive Christians to carry the Holy Eucharist home to their Houses, that they might always find there a Sanctuary against the Violence of Persecutions, and when she allowed the same Privilege.

viledge to the Monks in the Deserts, that they might there find Grace and Strength to resist the Temptations of the Devil.

Such are the Duties you owe towards the Holy Eucharist, considered as the Oracle and Refuge of Christians; and such are the Practices by which you may accomplish them. The *Levites* watched by turns at the Ark of the Covenant. The Holy Women of *Israel* passed there whole Nights in Prayer. *Ann* the Prophetess, who had the Happiness to see her Saviour before she Died, was Day and Night in the Temple. All which is to teach us the Worship we ought to pay to the Holy Sacrament of the Altar. But now let us consider it as the Manna of the Church, and the true Nourishment of the Faithful.

C H A P. XVIII.

of COMMUNION.

TH E end proposed by Jesus Christ in the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist, his repeated Commands that we approach it, his Threats in case we do not, the Practice of the first Christians, the Doctrine of all the Fathers, and the Obligation that the Church, in her general Councils, hath imposed on us, of Communicating at least once a Year at *Easter*, do all plainly shew, that Communion is not only an excellent thing, but absolutely necessary to Salvation. Our Saviour has positively declared, *That unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, you shall not have Life in you, John 6. 57.* Elsewhere he compares himself to a King, who having invited many of his Subjects to a great Feast, was enraged against those who refused to come, upon frivolous Excuses, and held them for ever after in Disgrace.

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I cannot too often repeat to you the indispensable Necessity of Communion, nor will the Communicating once a Year suffice you, any more than Eating once a Year would be sufficient to preserve the Life of your Body: you ought to endeavour to approach it often, and even every Day, if your Life were pure enough to deserve that Happiness. This was the Intention of Christ, and is still the Desire of the Church, who has declared in the Council of *Trent*, that she most heartily wished, that at every *Mass* the Faithful there present would Communicate with the Priest. Frequent Communion then is what every good Director ought to approve, advise and encourage all he can. But since he that Communicates unworthily eats and drinks his own Damnation, it behoves the Priest, notwithstanding the Desire he may have to send his Penitents to Communion, that he examine them first, or cause them to examine themselves, and that they presume not to eat of the Sacred Element before they have been proved. The Holy

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Holy Fathers, who debarred not the Faithful from Communion, failed not to exact the greatest Preparations imaginable.

They would have, that a Christian, to Communicate, should possess the pure Love of God without Mixture, that he should be Dead to Sin, to the World, and to himself; pure not only of Body, but of Mind and Heart. Exempt not only from grosser Crimes, but even from the Stains they leave in those who are not perfectly cured, holy and adorned with many Vertues, enriched with good Works, cloathed with a Nuptial Robe, full of Fervour and Uñction, animated with a sincere Devotion, a Disciple of Jesus Christ, faithful not only to believe, but also to practise his Doctrine, and to live according to the Holy Maxims of his Gospel, leading a Life worthy his Vocation, a living Member of Christ's Body, humble, chaste, patient and charitable; in a word, a true Christian; for he that says Christian, says all that, since in the Scripture-Language, *Christian* and *Holy* signify the

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the same thing. Be not surprized when you read, or hear preached, how the Holy Fathers required such Dispositions for Communion as seem so extreamly elevated and pure, and have declared, that he who has them ought to Communicate often, and he who has 'em not, ought not to Communicate so much as once in his whole Life. 'Tis true, they have exacted great Purity, and most Holy Dispositions, from all Communicants; yet they pretended not to expect these Dispositions in all their Perfection, and in their highest degree. Vertues have Degrees one above another; and tho' they are necessary to Salvation, yet not in all their Degrees, but in some. So that the Fathers demand not for Communion, but so much as is necessary to be saved. Now, all the Sanctity necessary to be saved, consists in two Points; the first, is, to love God above all things: the second is, to increase perpetually in this Love. That the Love of God above all things is absolutely necessary to Salvation, you doubt it not. *St. Francis Sales* has very

very well proved it in his excellent Book of the Love of God, where he expressly says, That the Love of God above all things is necessary for all Men, and sufficient for every one to be saved. 'Tis easily known by the Life of a Christian, whether he be in this Disposition or no : for, as St. Gregory says, Works are the true Proofs of Love, and he that loves God, keeps his Commandments. This Love ought to rule over all our other Loves, that is, if we are so unhappy as to have the Love of God joined with the Love of Worldly things, we ought always to give the Ascendant to the Love of God, and that it may surmount our Earthly Affections, as Oil does Water. The Heart that thus loves God, never fails to prefer him before all things, when occasion offers : he is ready to loose all, even his Life, rather than the Favour of his God. In this there is nothing can be thought too elevated, nor too strong. 'Tis precisely what God requires ; and whoever comes short of this Love, is not yet justified, nor a Child of God, nor freed from the A-

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anathema denounced by *St. Paul* against all who love not the Lord *Jesus*, and consequently not fit to Communi-
cate.

The second necessary Point, is, to encrease daily in this Love, for it is enjoined us in its highest Degree of Perfection ; not that we are able to arrive to it in this Life, but thither it is we ought to bend all our Endeavours. 'Tis what we are taught by all Spiritualists, when they tell us with *St. Paul*, that we must pursue our Course, to arrive where *Christ Jesus*, in calling us, has determined; *Phil. 3. 12.* Brethren, says this Apostle, I don't account that I have yet attained one thing ; but forgetting what is behind me, and advancing towards the things that are before me, I pursue to the Mark, to the Prize to which God has called us through *Jesus Christ*.

' We are told by *St. Augustine*,
' That God demands of us a Love so
' perfect, that he will not suffer the
' least Motion in our Heart, nor the
' least Affection that proceeds not
' from his Love, and returns not thi-
' ther as to its proper Source ; that
there

‘ there is no arriving at this Perfection of Love, but by advancing perpetually towards it, some by faster, some by slower Steps, according to the Measure of Grace given them; and he that stops, must never pretend to arrive at it, and consequently must infallibly perish. We are taught by St. *Bernard*, That not to advance in Vertue, is, to go backward: and by the Church, That we ought incessantly to Pray that God will nourish what good things he has bestowed on us, that he will give us an Encrease of Faith, Hope and Charity, the Spirit of Religion, and all other Vertues.

A Soul thus disposed may presume with Confidence to Communicate more or less frequently, according to the Progress she makes in the Love of God: she may be truly said to possess, at least in a sufficient degree, these great Dispositions required by the Holy Fathers, because they are all reduced to Charity.

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C H A P. XIX.

*Of the Devotion necessary for
Communion.*

THere is nothing wherein Men more dangerously deceive themselves than concerning the Devotion wherewith they ought to approach the Holy Communion, they acknowledge no other than that which every one endeavours to feel the very day he Communicates, and 'tis by this alone, that very many judge of their Communion; when they have perform'd this great Duty with a sensible Devotion, and more than ordinary Fervour, they presently conclude all is well, they believe it very good, and so rest satisfied: on the contrary, when they have felt nothing of this Fervour, nor any good Motion, when they have been under a driness and sterility of Spirit, and an insensibility of Heart, they become so dejected, that they know not what to think of their Communion, and very often

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often either dare not approach it, or wish they had not: nevertheless this sensible Devotion is an equivocal sign, and frequently deceitful; for very good Souls there are, whom God is pleased to prove, by terrible Drinesses and Tepidities, yet whose Communion are most excellent; and there are not wanting great Sinners, who, without forsaking their Sins, have sometimes a sensible Fervour in Communicating, whether it be, that the Devil, to decieve 'em, heats their Imagination, or that they are of a Constitution more tender and easy to be moved: but certain it is, that while they continue their irregular Lives, and retain an Affection for their Sins, let their Devotion be never so sensible, their Communion cannot be good.

So that to judge rightly both of the Fervour and Tepidity which by Communicants are sometimes felt, we must first see if this actual Devotion proceed from an habitual one, that is, if it be the Effect of a Devotion seated in the Heart, and if we shew it in the Conduct of our Lives;
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for the Devotion which continues ones whole Life, is much better than that which lasts not above half a Day. True Devotion is an effective Will to please God. Effective Wills are not known but by their Effects: and these Effects are not Words, but Works: and these Works are not only to Confess and Communicate often, in which the greatest part of Christians now a days would place all Devotion, but to accomplish faithfully the Will of the Eternal Father. ' And this Will, as St. Cy-
' prian says excellently well, is no o-
' ther thing than that which Jesus
' Christ himself performed, and
' taught Mankind. To be humble
' through the whole Course of ones
' Life, firm in Faith, in Speech re-
' served, equitable in Judging, regu-
' lar in Manners, charitable and
' compassionate towards the Poor,
' to be Just to all the World, to suf-
' fer Injuries, but never to offer any,
' to be in Peace with ones Brethren,
' to love God with all ones Heart,
' to look upon him with Love as our
' Father, and with a respectful Fear

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‘ as our Judge, to prefer nothing before Christ, who has preferred nothing before us, to keep our selves inseparably united to his Love, and remain fixed to the Foot of the Cross, with a Stout and generous Confidence. This it is to be Devout; this is to have an effective Will to please God. A Soul in this happy State, may and ought to Communicate often, even tho’ she felt no great Gust nor Fervour in it. But to pretend to be devout, and to have an effective Will to please God, without squaring our Lives by the Gospel, without walking in the narrow Way, without disengaging our selves from the Corruption of the World, and without correcting our Vices, is, to couzen and blind our selves most miserably, there being nothing more contrary to the Word of God: witness St. John: *My Children*, says he, *let us not love in Word, nor in Tongue, but in Deed and Truth, because the Mark by which we know Jesus Christ, is, if we keep his Commandments. He that keeps them not, and says he knows him, is a Liar, and*
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the Truth is not in him, 1 John 3. 18.
Again he adds, *He that says he abideth in Jesus Christ, ought to walk as he did.* 'Tis by this Rule we are to judge of our Communions: we need but to examine into our Lives and Conversations. Every Man that renounces Jesus Christ, cannot be thought worthy to Communicate, because he is an Antichrist. Now, if you'll ask St. *Augustine* if any such Christians are to be found who renounce Jesus Christ, he'll answer you there are but too many. 'To know 'em, says he, let us not stop at Words, but go on to consider their Actions. If you put the Question to those who make Profession of Christianity, they shall presently, one and all, confess the Name of Christ; but stop their Mouths, and examine well into their Lives, and see whether you may not, by Authority of Scripture, account all those for Antichrists, who confess Christ with their Lips, and declare against him in their Morals. Whoever denies Christ by his Actions, is an Antichrist. I regard not what he

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‘ he says, let me see what he does :
 ‘ ’tis his Works ought to speak for
 ‘ him, not his Words.

Take it for granted then ; that
 while you lead a Criminal Life,
 whatever Devotion you may have at
 Communion, is false ; and while
 your Life is pure, holy, and worthy
 of God, the want of a little actual
 Devotion, ought not to hinder you
 from Communion.

C H A P. XX.

*Of the Hindrances which Venial
 Sins may bring to frequent Com-
 munion.*

IT must not be imagined, that for
 frequent Communion ’tis suffici-
 ent to be exempt from Crimes which
 debar us Entrance into the Kingdom
 of God. The Saints have demanded
 a greater Sanctity from all who de-
 sire often to partake of this ineffable
 Mystery ; they have themselves for-
 bore it upon very slight Faults, and
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'tis wonderful to read how very nice and scrupulous they were upon this account. *St. Chrysostome* having been a little vexed to hear a certain Bishop rail and accuse another in open Church, and before all the People, durst not himself, in this Condition, offer the dreadful Sacrifice; he desired another Bishop to do it for him, and went out of the Church, because, says the Historian, he would not celebrate the Divine Sacrifice with a disturbed Mind. *St. Gregory* the Pope omitted saying *Mass* several Days, because a Poor Man was found in *Rome*, who died of Cold and Misery, fearing it might be laid to his Charge, through some Neglect on his part.

Now, the better to inform you what Measures to take, as to Communion, when you find your self loaden with Venial Sins, I shall first tell you they are of several kinds.

There are, according to the Language of the Fathers, voluntary and involuntary ones: some which proceed from our own corrupt Inclinations, others from external Temptations:

tions: some that we commit with Deliberation, others through Inadvertence: some come from long Custom and Habit, others from some passing Occasion. There are Sins of Negligence, and Sins of meer Frailty; Sins of Malice and of Ignorance; some wound the Purity of our Souls more, and others less. Charity in some seems more concerned than in others. Some are apt to give Scandal, others not: some cause more Trouble in our Mind than others. In fine, the Number of them is sometimes greater, other times less. But that all these Distinctions may not confound you, I shall set down four sorts of Venial Sins, which may and ought to be accounted Hindrances to frequent Communion, *viz.* Sins of Custom and Habit, Sins against Charity and Chastity, Sins slighted and multiplied, on pretence of their being small and inconsiderable, and Sins not sufficiently expiated by Penitence. But let us dwell a little upon each kind.

I.

Sins of Custom and Habit render us unworthy to Communicate every Week, according to the Doctrine of *St. Francis Sales*; who says, 'that to Communicate every Eight Days, it is requisite to have neither the Guilt of Mortal Sin, nor the least Affection to Venial Sin, and to have moreover a great Desire to Communicate. We must distinguish well, says he, between Venial Sins, and the Affection to them. We cannot in this Life be quite free from Venial Sins, but we may very well be without having any Affection to 'em. 'Tis of all such Affections then that we ought to purge our Souls; that is to say, we ought not voluntarily to cherish any kind of Venial Sin, because such Affections are directly contrary to Devotion, and render the Soul extreamly weak and sickly. This Great Saint had taken this Doctrine from *Gennadius*, who lived in the sixth Age. I neither commend, says this Author, nor blame the Custom of Communicating

'ting every Day. But I would ex-
 'hort all the Faithful to Communi-
 'cate every Sunday, provided never-
 'theless that their Hearts be disenga-
 'ged from all Affection to Venial
 'Sin; for otherwise I dare maintain,
 'that their Communion will rather
 'defile than purify their Consciences.
 'And again, altho' some Stains and
 'Blemishes may remain in the Soul,
 'as the unhappy Effects of Sin; yet
 'provided the *Will* be not engaged,
 'and that we endeavour, before
 'Communion, with Tears and Pray-
 'ers to satisfy the Divine Justice;
 'we may with Confidence approach
 'the Holy Eucharist, casting our
 'selves entirely upon the Mercy of
 'God, who never refuses Pardon to
 'an humble Penitent: I speak to
 'those who are not guilty of Mortal
 'Sin. 'Tis plain then we ought to
 be free from all Venial Sins, of Ha-
 bit and Custom, which is a Disposi-
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ence, which seldom deceives us, but when we will our selves, that so we may be able to give Testimony that we use our utmost Endeavours to avoid Sin, and all the Occasions of it.

II.

'Tis the Opinion of St. *Augustine*, that Venial Sins against Chastity, especially when frequently committed, ought to give a just Apprehension of receiving the Holy Eucharist unworthily : for, speaking (in a Sermon) of Married People, to whom such Faults frequently happen ; ' You'll tell me, says he, that what ' you commit may be Sins, yet they ' are but small and inconsiderable ' ones. I grant they may not be ' Mortal ; yet nevertheless they are ' such, as if often committed, and ' no care be taken to redeem them ' by Fasting and Alms-Deeds, will ' extreamly defile the Soul. We are ' the Images of God, and Temples of ' the Holy Ghost, and every time ' we commit an immodest Action, ' we disfigure his Image, and defile ' his Temple. Judge then if 'tis rea-

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'ner. I comprehend not how a
 ' Man that would scruple to be seen
 ' at Church in a dirty Suit of Cloaths,
 ' shall have the Confidence to present
 ' himself at the Table of Jesus Christ
 ' with an impure Heart, without
 ' fearing what the Apostle threatned
 ' to those who Communicate un-
 ' worthily. What St. *Augustine* said
 of Chastity, we may say also of
 Charity. They who often offend a-
 gainst this Vertue, so as to make
 their Neighbour uneasy upon every
 slight Occasion, or give Scandal, as
 it happens to many Masters and Mi-
 stresses, who giving way to their
 Humour, are perpetually Scolding,
 and thundering sharp Words in their
 Servants Ears, and cannot bear with
 the least Fault: such, I say, are not
 fit to Communicate every Eight
 Days: 'and St. *Francis Sales*, in one
 ' of his Epistles, commends a Con-
 ' fessor for denying Communion to
 ' a Woman who took not sufficient
 ' care to correct her Impatience: he
 ' assured her, that if she would be
 ' ruled by him, she should receive
 ' more Benefit from one Communi-
 ' on,

‘on, than otherwise she would do
 ‘from two or three. Remain, says
 ‘he, for a while in the Posture of
 ‘the *Cananean*; say to Jesus Christ,
 ‘Lord I am not worthy to eat of the
 ‘Childrens Bread, I am truly a Dog,
 ‘perpetually snarling and snapping
 ‘at my Neighbour, by my peevish
 ‘and reproachful Language. But
 ‘tho’ the Dogs are not allowed to
 ‘eat of the entire Loaf, yet they are
 ‘not refused at least the Crums that
 ‘fall from their Master’s Table.
 ‘Therefore, my dearest Master, give
 ‘me leave to ask, if not thy own
 ‘most Sacred Body, at least that
 ‘Plenty of Blessings it bestows on all
 ‘who with a sincere Love approach
 ‘it.

III.

Sins which we commit boldly, and
 without scruple, on account of their
 being little, render us likewise un-
 worthy of frequent Communion:
 and indeed I cannot say whether
 such may be called Venial Sins or
 no. *St. Bernard* seems to be of ano-
 ther Opinion, when he says, ‘That
 ‘God, who is just, considers not on-

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ly what we do, but with what Spirit we do it : look not upon it as a small Evil, to commit knowingly and deliberately the least Sin. Let no Man say to himself, These are but small Faults, 'tis not worth the while to correct them. What great harm is it to go on in the same Road, since at the most they are but Venial ? This very Disposition, Brethren, is an Impenitence, a Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, an unpardonable Sin. 'Tis certain the slighting of lesser Sins multiplies so much the Number of them, that the Soul becomes soon all covered with Impurities, and rendered unworthy to appear before its Spouse. Neglect not therefore your Sins because they are small ; for Drops of Water are very small, and yet, when multiplied, they form Torrents, which swell up Rivers to that height, as to overtop their Banks, and even sweep away Trees by the Roots. The Faults of the Just, says St. *Gregory* the Pope, unless they be daily cancelled by Pennance, hinder the Soul from
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‘tasting as it ought this Heavenly
‘Food: and the Proof which St.
‘*Paul* requires before Communion,
‘is, to be understood of small Sins
‘as well as greater. Consider well,
‘says St. *Bonaventure*, with what
‘Charity and Fervour you approach
‘the Son of God: for you ought not
‘only to avoid Mortal Sins, but Ve-
‘nial too, which taking their En-
‘crease from Negligence and Sloth,
‘and the Distractions of a careless,
‘unthinking Life, they give the Soul,
‘if not a Mortal Wound, at least
‘such a Dullness and Tepidity, as
‘renders it unfit to approach the
‘Holy Altar, if the Holy Ghost sends
‘not a Spark of his Sacred Fire, to
‘enflame the Heart and dissipate the
‘Cloud. How careful then ought
‘you to be in preparing for Holy
‘Communion, since the want of
‘Reverence, Circumspection and
‘Attention, does evidently expose
‘you to the Danger of receiving the
‘Son of God unworthily.

IV.

Lastly, Not to take care to expi-
ate Venial Sins by Fasting, Prayer,
I 5 and

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and Alms-Deeds, ought also to be accounted a sufficient Hindrance to frequent Communion. *St. Augustine* makes true Christian-Piety to consist in two things, in not committing Mortal Sins, and in daily endeavouring, by good Works, to expiate Venial Sins. *St. Jerome*, describing the penitential Life of the Renowned *St. Paula*, says, ‘She used to spread the Ground with Hair-cloth whereon she was to sleep, if at any time one may say she slept, since she passed as it were whole Nights in Prayer, accomplishing what *David* said; *I will every Night wash my Bed, I will water my Couch with Tears:* her Eyes seemed a plentiful Fountain of them. She wept so bitterly, even for small Faults, that one would have thought her guilty of most heinous Sins. When we desired her to have some regard to her Sight, and to preserve it for Reading the Holy Scripture, she answered us, No, I ought to disfigure this Face which I have so often taken Pains to set forth with White and Red against the Command of God.

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' I must now punish this Body,
' which has tasted so great a share
' of Pleasures. Now let the Course-
' ness of Hair-cloth succeed the Soft-
' ness of fine Linnen and costly Ap-
' parel. In those Days I studied to
' please my Husband, and now I
' will see to please my Saviour Jesus
' Christ.

Never therefore approach the Holy
Communion before you have first
purified your self by some sort of
Pennance. To avoid ill Company,
to seek Retirement, to act contrary
to ones sinful Inclinations, to resist
Idleness by Labour, Liberty of Speech
by Silence, small Affronts by Praises
and Marks of Esteem, evil Suspicions
by favourable Interpretations, Par-
cimony by Liberality, want of Cha-
rity to the Poor by plentiful Alms,
Motions of Pride by Acts of Humi-
lity, Aversions by Instances of
Friendship, Negligence by Vigilance,
Pusillanimity by Courage, a soft and
sensual Life by Mortification, In-
temperance by Fasting, Peevishness
and Impatience by a mild and meek
Behaviour, to visit the Sick and those

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in Prison, to reconcile Differences; to exercise Hospitality, to rise to Midnight-Prayer, and to Matins on Sundays and Holidays, to pardon heartily all Injuries, to pray for our Enemies, to say our Lord's Prayer as we ought; in a word, to discharge faithfully all the Duties of our State, are Pennances which the Holy Fathers have recommended to us as the best we can do to expiate our smaller Sins, and to entitle us to eat of the Bread of Angels.

C H A P. XXI.

Rules upon frequent Communion.

ST. Bonaventure long since declared, That as one Remedy cannot properly be applied to all Diseases, so one and the same Rule for Communion cannot be given to all the Just: however, I have here set down some Maxims which the Reader may easily apply to himself.

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1. Such as are engaged in the Cares and Concerns of the World, seldom can lead a Life so pure as to fit them for a Weekly Communion; so that once or twice a Month methinks might satisfy, if they'd endeavour to keep a strict Watch upon their Souls, their Actions, and the Purity of their Consciences. This made St. *Bonaventure* say, that excepting good Priests, scarcely one was to be found so Vertuous and Holy as a Weekly Communion might not suffice, unless it happen, says he, that for some particular Reason they Communicate oftner, as in case of a dangerous Sicknes, some great Festival, or an extream Thirst and ardent Desire of receiving him, who alone is capable of refreshing the Fervour of a loving Soul. *Avila*, a Holy Priest, who lived in *Spain* in the time of St. *Teresa*, was of Opinion, 'That the Holy Communion 'ought not to be allowed to every 'one as often as they desire it, because it often happens that they 'are led more by Humour than Devotion; and 'tis therefore they receive

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' ceive no Benefit at all from their
 ' Communion, which is a most grie-
 ' vous Abuse. Teach them then to
 ' look upon this Myſtery with a moſt
 ' profound Reſpect; and whoever is
 ' wanting in this, let him be depri-
 ' ved of Communion till ſuch time
 ' as he comprehends the Value of it,
 ' and acknowledges his Unworthi-
 ' neſs. Three or four times a Year,
 ' is ſufficient for the common People
 ' to approach this Sacred Table; for
 ' others, nine or ten times; for Re-
 ' ligious Perſons, once a Fortnight,
 ' and for thoſe whom you ſhall find
 ' particularly toucht with a Zeal and
 ' Love for God, and who give evi-
 ' dent Proofs of a worthy Commu-
 ' nion, by the Progreſs they make in
 ' the Spiritual Life, they may Com-
 ' municate every Week, and oftner
 ' ought not to be permitted, without
 ' extraordinary Cauſe, in which great
 ' Prudence is requiſite. I doubt
 ' there are few fit to Communicate
 ' above once a Week: *St. Bonaven-*
 ' *ture* declared, for his part he could
 ' find none. *St. Francis de Paula* at
 ' firſt did not Communicate above
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‘ three or four times a Year, after-
‘ wards he came to receive every
‘ Sunday, but oftner than that he
‘ was not willing.

2. A more frequent Communion
nevertheless may sometimes be al-
lowed, even to Persons of the World,
and with much more Reason to such
as are consecrated to God, when
they commit only Sins of meer Frail-
ty, of Inadvertence and Surprize;
and that these Faults render them
the more humble and fervent, as it
generally happens to Devout Souls,
who continually groan under the
Yoke of this hard Necessity of daily
Offending, and most earnestly Pray
for their Deliverance. God left us
not under this sad Necessity without
Reason; Baptismal-Grace might
without doubt have destroyed it, if
it had so pleased our Saviour Christ;
but he has, through his Divine Wis-
dom, otherwise determined. It was
his Will that Christians should have,
in the Experience of their Failings,
a daily and sensible Conviction of
their Weaknesses, a Subject of Hu-
miliation and Patience, a sufficient
Cause

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Cause to distrust themselves, and to live in an absolute Dependance on his Grace, a Motive of Disgust for this Life, and of desire for a better; and that so the Concupiscence remaining in us might be destroyed by its own Effects, while those small Faults wherein it engages the true Servants of God, serve as a Spur to excite them to renew a more vigorous War against it, and to root themselves still deeper in Humility, and in the Desire of being speedily united to their Eternal Father. Hence Venial Sins in Christians of a lively Faith, and animated Hope, are generally followed with Confusion, Humiliation, and interior Sighs, in which they are ready to cry out with St. Paul, *Unhappy Wretch that I am! who will deliver me from this Body of Death*, Rom. 7. 24. Sins of this nature are no Hindrance to a Weekly Communion; and in case the frequent Experience of our Weakness should create in us a Holy Disquiet, and a sincere Desire to Communicate, as the weary Traveller desires Refreshment; I see not why we might

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might not be admitted to Communion two or three times a Week.

3. There are many, who through an extream Weakness, are apt, notwithstanding their Communions, to relapse pretty often into their ordinary Failings, yet such ought not, because they perceive in themselves no sensible Amendment, to deprive themselves of frequent Communion, since it sufficeth, that the Holy Eucharist fortifies and preserves them in a certain State of Grace, at least sufficient for their Salvation, provided they seriously endeavour to correct themselves, to deplore their Miseries, and are humble. Then, I say, they may, nay, ought to Communicate every Week, because the blessed Eucharist is the true Remedy against small Faults. 'Tis therefore, that the best and most rigorous Priests do often say *Mass*, altho' they daily offend.

4. To Communicate every day, requires an extraordinary Sanctity, no less than to be entirely dead to the World and to our selves, and to live only for God, to be full of Zeal
for

for his Glory, and the Salvation of Souls, not to be guilty but of the most inconsiderable Faults, to keep our selves always in the Presence of God ; to possess all Vertues in an eminent degree, to have our Baptismal Innocence, or the Grace of a perfect Repentance ; to be no more sensible than one dead, of the Praises and Dispraises, Goods and Evils of this World, to have our Conversation with the Angels in Heaven, to have an absolute Dominion over our Passions, to have little more than the bare Root of Concupiscence left in us, and never to act but by the Motion of the Holy Ghost. Now, as there is scarcely any upon Earth to be found in so pure and elevated a State, so neither is there hardly any fit to Communicate every Day ; inasmuch that St. *Bonaventure* says, ' Good Priests ought neither to say ' *Mass* too often, nor too seldom ; ' to say it too often, is in my Opinion, says he, a Mark of Irreverence ; for I doubt whether any one is to be found so full of Charity, and in so great and constant

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‘ a Fervour as to approach the Holy
‘ Altar every Day, with all the Pie-
‘ ty and Devotion requisite, and who
‘ happens not sometimes to commit
‘ Faults, for which he would do bet-
‘ ter not to celebrate. We see that
Gennadius and *St. Francis Sales* nei-
ther declare for nor against daily
Communion. *Theodoret* relates of
St. Simeon Stylitus, That he passed
the whole *Lent* eight and twenty
times without Eating or Drinking,
and at the forty Days end he recei-
ved for his first Nourishment the Ho-
ly Eucharist, which restored to him
the Strength he had lost by so long
and rigid a Fast.

St. Geneveva, who lived at the
same time, shut her self up from the
Epiphany till *Maundy-Thursd*ay, ap-
plying her self to Prayer, Fasting,
and Lying hard, to prepare for *Ea-*
ster Communion. *St. Francis* did
the same. Several Monks used to
Communicate the first Sunday in
Lent in their Monasteries, and then
would go into the Desert, and there
remain without Communion till
Easter. The *Carthusians*, when first
they

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they began their Order, did neither Communicate, nor even hear *Mass* every Day, as may be seen in a Letter written by *Peter de Blois* to a *Carthusian*, who desired to go out of his Order, because he could not have *Mass* every Day; but this Great Man dissuaded him from it, telling him, that St. *Bennet* would never be made a Priest, and Communicated so seldom, that at the beginning of his Conversion, he knew not even when *Easter* came. He added, that 'tis more than we read of that St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* did offer the dreadful Sacrifice every Day.

C H A P. XXII.

Of the Desire of Communicating.

WE are bid by the Apostle St. *John*, not to believe every Spirit, but to prove the Spirits if they are of God, 1 John 4. 1. 'Tis very easy to discern from what Spirit our Desires proceed, when they manifestly tend

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tend to Evil ; they are called by St. Paul, *Sins evidently preceding the Judgment*, 1 Tim. 5. 24. but the Difficulty lies in making this Discovery, when we are inclined to undertake the performing good Actions, because none but God can know by what Motives we are led. This may be said in regard to frequent Communion : a great many People demand it, and have no other Reason to give, but that they desire to Communicate, and find great Devotion in it. Now, this Desire may be from a good Motive, and it may be from a bad one : if it is good, 'twere an Injustice to deprive them of so great a Benefit ; if bad, it would be a very ill thing to grant it them. To judge aright, let us reason upon the Nourishment of the Soul as on that of the Body. When a Man complains of Hunger, the State of his Health is to be enquired into ; for a craving Appetite is sometimes the Symptom of a Disease, as well as a Mark of good Health ; in the one the Food is well digested, and affords Nourishment and Strength to the

the Body; in the other, the more 'tis fed, the more ill Humors are encreased, and Nature thereby weakned and destroyed. We may say the same thing of the frequent Desire of Communicating. It may proceed from the Health, or from the Infirmitie of the Soul. Sometimes it arises from the Love of God, which consumes by degrees the Effects of Concupiscence, enlightens the Understanding, shews the Soul how contemptible are all Earthly things, and puts her upon earnestly desiring to be united to her God: and as Communion is the only Means by which she can possess him, she goes to it with the same Greediness as the hungry Infant throws it self upon the Mothers Breast. Another Desire there is which proceeds from the Darknes and Disorder of the Soul, from Vanity, from an Inclination to do what others do, and sometimes from Hypocrisy. Now, there is no way to discern from what Principle these two Desires come, but by Mens Lives and Actions. It behoves you then to examine well
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what Effects the Holy Communion works in you, what are the Fruits, and what Impressions it makes in your Heart. If it fortifies you against your vicious Inclinations, if after Communion you are more faithful in the Discharge of your Duties, if you are more careful to correct your Faults, if you are become more humble, more mortified, more out of Love with the World, more inclined to Retirement and Prayer, more attentive to the Word of God, and more diligent to observe it, 'tis a most certain Sign that your Desires are good, and you need not scruple to follow them: for the more you shall receive of this Divine Food, the more will your Fervour encrease, and your Faults diminish. On the contrary, if frequent Communion produces in you no such Effects of Grace, if you fall as often and as easily as before, suspect all such Desires, you may conclude they come not from God, but the Devil; betake your self to Penance, forbear Communion for a while, till you have digested, (if I may use that Term) by a more

more pure and ardent Love of God all the ill Humors you have contracted in your Heart. Think how many deluded Souls there are who vainly imagine themselves in the State of Grace, because for want of proving themselves sufficiently, as the Apostle commands, they falsely persuade themselves they are free from Mortal Sin. Such are not to be admitted to Communion, how pressing soever their Desires may be, because their Desires proceed from the Blindness of their Heart, which deprives them of the Knowledge and Sight of their Sins, and is often the Effect of a terrible, but just, Chastisement. Some there are who think it sufficient to live free from palpably gross and scandalous Sins, but make no scruple to follow their own Will and Humor, seeking in all things to please themselves, are never contented with what is necessary, have no manner of Zeal for their Perfection, hate to take Pains unless constrained to't, or for Fashion sake, and then 'tis with an intollerable Negligence and Tepidity, all their Actions are grounded

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grounded upon Human Motives, to be esteemed and honoured of Men: they seem fervent enough when Eyes are upon them, but otherwise are very languid, have a restless Curiosity to pry into other Peoples Concerns, cannot bear without Envy to see any one esteemed, and approve of nothing but what they do themselves, have scarce either Charity or Complaisance for their Neighbour, apt to frame Suspicions, lay up Resentments, and won't endure the least Adversity or Reproof. All which Effects of Vanity and Self-love, supposing they be not joined with grosser Crimes, must always be acknowledged dangerous Evils; and altho' we were assured, which cannot be, that they all amounted not to a Mortal Sin, still it may truly be affirmed, that they are very unfit Dispositions for Communion: for our Lord, speaking of what is apt to choke in us the Seed of his Divine Word, makes no mention of Blasphemies, Murthers, Thefts, and such like capital Crimes; but of the Distractions of the World, the

Love of Riches and Pleasures ; in a word, the Love of our selves, which inclines us to seek always our own Temporal Interests, and never the Interests of Jesus Christ.

Another sort of Christians there is, who carry a very fair Exterior, and in the Performance of outward Acts of Piety are faithful enough, but take no care at all to purify their Hearts ; they are called by St. James 1. 8. the Apostle, *Men of a double Mind.* ‘ And St. Bernard says such ‘ Souls as these cannot bear the Entrance of him who penetrates all ‘ things. Their whole Conduct is a ‘ pure Hypocrisy, and a continual ‘ Disguise : they make a Motion with ‘ their Hands and Arms, as if they ‘ were doing the Will of God ; but ‘ their Hearts are dry, without Union, without Love, acting through ‘ Custom, punctual in the Exercises ‘ of the Body which are of little moment, and unfaithful to the Law ‘ of Charity, which is the Law of ‘ Perfection, restraining at a Gnat, ‘ and swallowing a Camel, Slaves ‘ to their own Will, Covetous, thirsting

‘ sting after Glory, and gnawed
‘ with Envy and Ambition. These
‘ are the People, adds this Holy Fa-
‘ ther, who wilfully deceive them-
‘ selves, are Vertuous only in Ap-
‘ pearance, whose Passions are cover-
‘ ed under the Embers, but not ex-
‘ tinguished; the first occasion makes
‘ ‘em break out again into a Flame,
‘ opens their Wounds afresh, and
‘ causes the Tree which was only cut,
‘ and not pluckt up by the Root, to
‘ Bud forth anew, and infinitely
‘ multiply its Branches. It plainly
appears then, by what *St. Bernard*
says, that Christians ought to judge
themselves by the Sincerity of their
Hearts, and not to pretend, that an
exteriour Justice, like that of the
Jews, is sufficient to give them a
Right to approach the Holy Com-
munion.

There are others again who desire
to Communicate, only because of the
Solemnity of the Day: a Sunday or
Holiday determines them to it, ta-
king, through a Pharisaical Spirit, a
thing purely exteriour, common to
the Good and the Bad, as a Rule for

the most important Action of Christian Religion. These People conduct themselves as if they were Masters of the Holy Ghost, and were sure to have him at their own Hours, and to oblige him to bestow his Graces upon them what Day they pleased. They flatter themselves with having entertained their Mind with a few good Thoughts, and imagine they have a great deal of Faith, Hope, Charity, and Humility, because they find in their Prayer-Books *Acts of Faith*, &c. which they recite, as they think, with great Devotion, not knowing that every Act which goes no farther than the Mind or Mouth, is but a meer Illusion.

‘ I perceive there are some, says St. *Chrysostome*, who approach the Eucharist more through Custom than Reason or Religion. In what State soever they be, when the *Epiphany* or *Easter* comes, they’ll be sure to Communicate. But neither the Time nor the Festival gives us any Right to it; ’tis the Purity of the Heart alone renders us worthy of it.

' it. With this we may approach it always, without it never.

Before I finish this Chapter, I must take notice of two great Faults, which most Christians commit when they are preparing for the Sacraments. The first is, that when their Confession and Communion is over, they neglect and forget themselves, and as if they had been regenerated in a second Baptism, they look no more back into their past Lives, but only what happens from one Confession to another. Their whole Time and Thoughts are taken up with examining into their least considerable Sins, instead of making those Sins which have kept them at such a distance from God, the principal Object of their Application, not to recall the Idea's of them into their Memory, but to encrease their Grief, Confusion and Humiliation: for the Scripture bids us *not be without Fear for the Sins that have been forgiven us*, Eccl. 5. 5. no doubt 'tis because of the ill Impressions and Weaknesses they leave in us, and of the Uncertainty we

are in, whether they have been forgiven us or no.

The second Fault is, that they seldom think of preparing themselves but on the very Day they Communicate, and which they make to consist in saying a greater number of Prayers, and making Acts, which very often are only the Effects of a heated Imagination, and natural Resentment: but for the essential Dispositions, which consist in being rooted in Charity, in leading a good Life, and in discharging the Obligations of their State, few think of attaining these before they go to Communion. Nevertheless, this is the first Preparation that God requires of us, the only one that can enable us to cry out, with *David, My Heart, O my God, hath spoken to thee before it drew nigh unto thee, because I seek thee alone in all my Actions.* This bears the Testimony of Works, which cannot deceive; while the other amounts to no more than the Testimony of the Tongue, and very often a meer Effect of the Imagination.

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C H A P. XXIII.

*Rules to know when Temptations
do harm, and when they ought
to hinder Communion.*

SON, says the Holy Ghost, *when thou art entering into the Service of God, prepare thy self for Temptation.* Eccl. 2. 1. 'Tis what Christ himself has passed through, and all the Saints after him. 'Tis the Crucible wherein he tries his Children, and the Furnace in which he purifies them. None can pretend Exemption from it; nay, the more fervently a Soul devotes her self to God, the more faithful she is in his Service, and the more Zeal she has for his Glory, the more the Devil is provoked against her, and prepares to attack her with the greater Violence. While we are for him, he lets us alone, and cares not to disturb us; but the moment we begin to think of leaving him, and returning to God, he falls into all the Rage and Fury imaginable.

He is scorched and consumed with Envy to see the happy Progress of the Saints, and how ardently they labour to raise themselves into the Places, and upon the Thrones whence he and his Angels have been driven. And as he is no less subtle than malicious, he sets all his Engines at work, to vex and torment them; and altho' he be very often foiled, yet still he ceases not to renew his Attacks. But our dear Redeemer, who hath obtained a compleat and glorious Victory over him, bestows upon his true and faithful Servants both a competent Light to discover his crafty Designs, and Strength to withstand his Assaults. Sometimes he attempts the Body, and sometimes the Mind, and torments them both to that degree, that even the most Pious Souls, who have a just Hatred to Sin, know not what to think of themselves: insomuch that if we were to judge them upon their own Testimony, we should not render them the Justice they deserve; we should often believe them guilty when they are innocent, by judging
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of them, not by what they are in the Eyes of God, but by the Trouble they seem to feel in Temptations.

Some there are, who having sustained many sharp Combats, and come off Victorious over their most dangerous Enemies, have afterwards had much ado to resist even the least considerable, and who, after having subdued and levelled Monsters, are stoppt and opposed by Pigmies. This happens by a particular Conduct of God's Mercy over them, like to that which he exercised towards the *Israelites*, among whom, after they had conquered Thirty Kings, he left the *Jebusites* to instruct them, says the Scripture, to exercise them, and keep them in awe. The Enemies we have to struggle withal, are our Vices. The first and most obstinate, is **Pride**, which has this of particular, that it raises it self upon the Ruine of the Rest, because the Satisfaction we generally take in having overcome our other Vices, proves often a most delicious Bait for this. 'Tis therefore that God, who loves a Sinner humbled with his Failings, better than

a Just Person puffed up with his Victories, often leaves in Pious Souls such Weaknesses and Miseries as turn to their greater Profit, and serve as a Counterpoise to the Vanity which they are apt to draw from their good Actions. Some we see, who after having given their whole Substance to the Poor, after renouncing all Pleasures, by taking upon them a Life of Pennance and Mortification, after having despised the World with all its Vanities, shall pass whole Years in struggling with small Faults, which one would think might be mastered in a moment. It is a wonderful thing, that they shall be able to resist such great Temptations, and yet yield to little ones, that they cannot so much as overcome an Impatience, a Jealousy, a Suspicion, an Inclination to tell a Lye, a hasty Passion, and a number of such like Failings, which they give way to. These Faults are followed with Regrets, Shame, and strong Resolutions of Amendment: but hardly are they risen till they fall again; and this God permits even to the most Pious and

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and Holy Souls, it being more profitable for them to be humble by falling, than proud by remaining upright. If these Faults happen in performing the Duties of our State, and that we are exposed to them by the Will of God or Charity, our Obedience blots them out, the Fire of that Charity by which we are animated, will consume them; and it may be said, that God, who permits them, designs, by an Effect of his Mercy, that they shall turn to our Advantage, by serving to encrease our Humility. Thus it happens with us as with Trees loaden with Fruit, whose Leaves falling upon the Ground, become a sort of Manure to feed and nourish them.

Many well-meaning Souls likewise are apt to mistake in judging of sinful Thoughts. To rectify which, they are to know, that so long as such Thoughts are only in the Mind, and that the Heart delights not in them, they are not Sins, because nothing can make 'em so but the Consent of the Will. 'Tis also true, that these Thoughts sometimes trouble

ble the Imagination, cause ill Impressions in the Body, and in what we call the *Sensitive Appetite*, which never fails to heighten and enflame the disorderly Motions of Concupiscence: yet hitherto the Will is not concerned. This Commotion which we cannot help, is common both to the Good and Bad; and though it be not Sin, yet 'tis more dangerous than a simple Thought, because it weakens our Liberty, and more nearly affects the Will. But still it is the Doctrine of the Church, that it is neither an ill Thought, nor the Motions it excites, but the Consent of the Will, that makes the Sin. Now, as the Operations of the Mind are not sensible, it frequently happens, that they who sin in Thoughts, do less perceive them, than others who are much tormented with them, and commit no Sin; and that for two Reasons: first, the true Servants of God have a Fear of him so lively imprinted in their Hearts, that they tremble at the very Shadow of Sin; while the lazy, tepid and insensible Christians are so disposed to receive
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ill Thoughts, and to yield to Temptations, that they hardly perceive when they give their Consent to them. The second Reason is, That the Devil holding Sinners Captives in the Bonds of Sin, concerns not himself with tormenting them, as he does the Just, by suggesting sinful Thoughts, but leaves them in a profound Sleep; and that he may the more effectually engage them, he fails not to inspire them with good Thoughts, and to put them upon exterior Works of Sanctity, in order to stifle all Remorse of Conscience, and settle them in a false Peace. But he deals not thus with good and pious Souls. Against these he moves both Heaven and Earth, and to procure their Fall, he fails not to summon all the Powers of Hell, he troubles their Imagination with gross and sinful Idea's, which adhere sometimes so strongly to the Mind, that they have scarce Light enough remaining to distinguish between the Impressions they make on the Body, and the Content of the Will; but God, who permits these Tryals for their greater Perfection,

Perfection, fails not the Assistance of his Grace, to overcome them: so that neither these Temptations, nor the little Failings they occasion, nor the Apprehensions of having yielded to greater Sins, when in Reality they have not: I say, none of these things ought to hinder such Pious Souls from frequent Communion. But if you should ask me why God deals thus with his Elect? and why he seems in some sort to deliver them up to their Enemy to be tormented? I must tell you, that such a Conduct is necessary, in order to deprive us of that great Stock of Confidence we have in our selves, and which has been deeply rooted in the Heart of Man ever since the Sin of his first Parents: For although by his own Experience he plainly sees what a blind, ignorant, weak, poor Creature he is, and that he can call nothing his own but Sin and Deceit, that his own Lights are no more than false Glimmerings, which lead him into Precipices, and that his Strength is like a Staff of Thorns, which pierceth the Hand that rests upon it; yet nevertheless

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vertheless every little Good he does by the help of Grace, still centers in the wretched Confidence he has in himself; and thus he acts, as if his Salvation were in his own Hands. But what is yet more strange; even they who are the most convinced of their Inability to do the least Good, and of the continual need they have of Grace, are notwithstanding very apt to trust too much to themselves in what they do. This appears in the great Surprise they seem to be in upon committing a Fault, as if they had an Assurance of never falling into Sin again; they fret, they vex, they trouble and disquiet themselves as if they thought the bare Force of their feeble Wills were a sufficient Security against their falling. Thence it comes, that no sooner they commit a Fault, but immediately they hurry away to Confession, and rashly undertake things much above their Strength, without considering whether their Vocation be of God or no. All this proceeds from Pride and Self-love, which inclines us to live independant of God, puts us upon seeking

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seeking our selves in every thing we do, and casts us into a deep Melancholy and Dejection, whenever we experience the Weakness of that Strength whereon we have so confidently relied.

This is what God is willing to destroy, by the Temptations he is pleased to send us, and by the Relapses he permits us to fall into. He is not content to convince us, by the Light of his Wisdom, of our Infirmities, and how much we are obliged to distrust our selves; but he thinks fit to establish these Sentiments in our Souls, by letting us experience in every thing our great Blindness and Weakness. He withdraws for a time the Light of his Holy Spirit, and the Knowledge of his Sacred Will. Grace, which supports the faithful Soul, and prevents her falling into Sin, is as it were, retired into the deepest Corner of the Heart: and as this Grace is wholly Spiritual and Imperceptible to Sense, the Soul receives no sensible Consolation from it. But that which proves her greatest Torment, is, that during this Spiritual

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ritual Desertion, the Devil takes the Opportunity of tormenting her with ill Thoughts, and makes her sometimes believe her self guilty of most grievous Sins, and perswades her, that she is irrecoverably lost. This is the Method God has chosen to conduct our Souls to true Holiness; thus he takes from us all Self-confidence, and teacheth us to cast our selves entirely into the Arms of his Mercy, and to take no other Measures for our Sanctification than what he has prescribed. This is a Condition most truly worthy of Compassion, and great Care ought to be had, that none of those whom God is pleased to continue under such Tryals, be debarred Communion, since that would be to add Affliction to Affliction, and to deprive them of a Sacrament which was instituted by Christ, for no other end than to fortify and comfort those that suffer in his Service: for it is to such he seems to address himself, when he says, *Come to me all you that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you, Mat. 11. 28.*

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Sometimes the Devil has Permission to torment them in their Bodies, by sharp and severe Diseases, which are apt to extort Words from them that betray much Impatience, altho' in their Hearts they submit to the Will of God : but these being involuntary Motions, can no ways be reputed sinful. On the contrary, there are many wicked Persons who seem patient enough in Sickneſs, and give exterior Signs of Submission and Repentance, which proceed only from a natural Fear they have of God's Judgments, and reaches no farther than their Imagination. Now, a Man that judgeth by Appearances, would be apt to condemn the former and justify these latter : but God, who judgeth the Heart, will reject these as Hypocrites, while he excuſeth in the other what the Violence of their Diſtemper provoked them to ſay. He diſcovers the Wolf in Sheep's Cloathing, and eaſily ſees through all Diſguiſes. As he is God of the Heart, he judgeth according to the real Diſpoſitions he finds in it, and not by what appears to Men.

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We have an admirable Proof of this Truth in Holy Writ. Never were there any two more opposite than *Job* and *Antiochus*: they were both afflicted. *Job*, after having suffered the Loss of all his Goods, had his Body all over Ulcerated from Head to Foot. *Antiochus* received a Mortal Wound in his Belly, and bruising himself by a Fall from his Chariot, his Sore began to putrify, and breed Vermine in abundance; so that besides the intollerable Pain he suffered, the Stench was so great which came from the Wound, that his Army was not able to endure it, and his most intimate Friends were afraid to come near him. Now, let us see a little the different Behaviour of these two Men. *Job* immediately adores the Providence of God, submits himself, blesteth his Holy Name, and suffers with a wonderful Patience; but afterwards, when his Misfortunes came still faster and heavier upon him, and touched him to the Quick, he then let fall such Complaints as would have rendred him suspected of a Criminal-Impatience, if

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if we had not learned by the Sequel of the Story, that he was not only justified in the Sight of God, but rewarded for his Patience. *Antiochus*, on the other hand, at first imagining his Disease would quickly pass over, became more haughty, insolent and proud; but when he perceived himself struck with Death, and that his Life was become burthensome to him, he began to use the Language of false Penitents, who in time of Danger borrow the Words of Saints, though not their Sentiments nor Dispositions. *It is just*, says he, *that the Creature should submit to the Creator.* 2 Maccab. 9. 15. But he who has Mercy in store for none but those whose Hearts are truly changed, had no regard to what he said, because he knew it proceeded not from the Love of God, but purely from the Fear of Dying.

'Tis plain then we ought not to judge of People by their Exterieur; for if we should, there is none who at the Hour of Death would not rather chuse to resemble *Antiochus* than *Job*. Yet a more Impious Wretch
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than the former the Earth never bore,
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But lest you may mistake me,
and thence pretend Excuses for your
Impatience, and Negligence in resist-
ing Temptations, you are to under-
stand, that all I have said supposeth
the Matter of the Temptation to be
so light, as not to amount to the
least Shadow of a Mortal Sin. For
some there are who falsely imagining
that their Heart takes no part in the
Disorder of their Senses, fall into
most grievous Dissolutions, which
they pretend to excuse by the Vio-
lence of their Temptations. To the
end therefore that you may not be
deceived in this Point, you must be
able to give this Testimony of your
self, first, that you abhor the Evils
proposed to you by your Temptati-
ons; that you resist them with all
your Strength, and that you make
use of all the Means to overcome
them which the Word of God pre-
scribes you, as Prayer, Fasting, the
Invocation of the Name of Jesus,
reading the Holy Scripture, and a-
bove all, the avoiding of Occasions,
having

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having this Maxim of Holy Writ fixt in your Heart ; *He that loves Danger, shall perish in it, Eccl. 3. 27.* And that Labour, Retirement, a Watchfulness over your self, a strict and penitent Life, be lookt upon as almost infallible Helps against yielding to Temptations.

C H A P. XXIV.

Of the Devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and to the rest of the Saints.

TH E Worship and Invocation of Saints, is a Doctrine established by the Church upon the Authority of Scripture, the Example of God himself, and Apostolical Tradition. For in the Scripture, we read of the Honour done to the Saints by God himself, of the extraordinary Gifts and Graces he bestowed upon them, and how he caused them both to be respected and feared by the greatest Princes of the Earth. There we read how the Saints pray for us, and that

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Sinners many times have been sent by Almighty God, to procure the Prayers of the Just, with a Promise of obtaining, by the means of such Prayers, the Remission of their Sins. Thus was *Abimeleck* sent to *Abraham*; *He will pray for thee*, says God, *and thou shalt live*, Gen. 20. 3. Go to my Servant *Job*, says he again to the Friends of this Holy Man, *he shall pray for you, I will hear his Prayer, and your Folly shall not be imputed to you*, Job 42. 8. There we read of the prodigious Miracles God was pleased to work by the Shadow of *St. Peter*, and the Handkerchers of *St. Paul*. That the Feasts of Martyrs are of Apostolical Institution, appears in the careful Observance the Church of *Smyrna* had of the Day of *St. Polycarp's* Death, who was Disciple and Successor to the Apostles in the Government of that Church. The Worshipping of Saints then being a thing in it self most innocent, none ought to be offended at it, and that for two Reasons; first, because Protestants themselves, tho' they deny that the Honour paid to Saints and their

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their Relicks, and the Prayers put up to them, has been the Practice of the Church from the time of the Apostles, yet they acknowledge it has been in Use from the third and the beginning of the fourth Century, much in the same manner as it is at this Day. *St. Basil, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. John Chrysostome,* and all the Great Men who lived in those Days and since, have invoked the Martyrs, appointed Feasts to be kept in Honour of them, offered the Holy Sacrifice at their Tombs, preserved their Relicks, exposed their Bones and Ashes to the Veneration of the Faithful, and related the Miracles God has wrought in their Churches, and before their Eyes, by the means of these Holy Relicks. The Church which by the Confession of *Luther, Calvin,* and their Disciples, was then in its Purity, saw all these things without ever opposing or condemning them: nay, on the contrary looked upon all those as Hereticks, who durst find fault with them. These Practices observed and recommended by all those Great Men

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Men I have named, have never hindered them from being lookt upon as very great Saints, and excellent Doctors. Now, if it be true, that with God there is no Acception of Persons, and that he has not two Weights and two Measures ; can it be thought that he will look upon as a Crime in the Seventeenth Century, a Worship which he has authorized by Miracles in the Fourth, Fifth and following Ages ? This Reason alone, duly considered, is sufficient to clear all Difficulties, and quiet the Mind in this Point.

But the second Reason to be given, is, That the Doctrine of the Church, in this Matter, has nothing of Ill in it, nor does it any ways diminish the Sovereign Worship due to God : for when she teaches, that it is good and profitable to Pray to Saints, she bids us Pray to them in the same Spirit of Charity, and according to that Order of Fraternal Society, which inclines us to beg the Help of each other's Prayers upon Earth ; so that if the Mediatorship of Jesus Christ were any ways lessened by

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the Intercession of the Saints in Heaven, it would be no less prejudiced by the Intercession of the Saints on Earth. But the manner of imploring the Help of God, and that of the Saints, is extremely different. We ask of God a Supply of all our Wants, as of him who is the supreme Lord of all things, and absolute Master of Life and Death : while on the other hand we speak to the Saints as to his Friends and Favourites, who are only capable of Praying for us, tho' in a more powerful manner than we our selves. Thus, when we address to God, we say properly ; *Have Mercy upon us, graciously hear us* : while we only say to the Saints, *Pray for us*. And if there be found in Hymns, or elsewhere, Expressions resembling those we make use of to God himself, the Intention of the Church is, that they be understood in the Sense I have now explained. The Holy Council of *Trent*, speaking of the Invocation of Saints, says, ' That the Saints ' reigning with Jesus Christ, offer up ' their Prayers to God for Men, that ' it

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' it is both good and profitable to in-
' voke them, and to have Recourse to
' their Aid and Assistance, for the
' obtaining God's Benefits through
' his Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who
' is our only Saviour and Redeemer.
Thus you see we pretend to obtain
nothing but through Jesus Christ,
nor expect to be heard but in his
Name. The Saints are his Members
and ours, his Children and our Bre-
thren, his Friends and our Protectors;
and in Praying to them, we do no
more than invite them to join in
Prayer with us, and for us, to our
common Master, in the Name of our
common Mediator.

You are to know likewise, that
when we say Mass upon a Saint's
Day, we offer not to him the Sacri-
fice which belongs only to God. The
Honour we pay to Saints on this oc-
casion, consists only in naming them
as faithful Servants of God, in giving
him Thanks for the Victories they
have obtained, and humbly beseech-
ing him to pour down his Graces up-
on us through their Intercessions.
This is the Doctrine of the Church,
L 2 taught

taught by St. *Augustine* above Twelve Hundred Years ago, and confirmed by the Council of *Trent*, which declares, that the Church offers not Sacrifice to Saints, but to God alone, who has Crowned them; that the Priest addresses not himself to St. *Peter* or St. *Paul*, telling them, *I offer you this Sacrifice*, but rendring Thanks to God for their Victories, he begs their Assistance, to the end that they whose Memory we celebrate on Earth, may vouchsafe to Pray for us in Heaven. In this manner we Honour the Saints, to obtain, through their Intercession, the Grace of God, especially that of imitating them. To which we are excited by the Consideration of their admirable Examples, and of the Honour we pay before Almighty God to their blessed Memory. But if it should be askt how we know whether the Saints hear our Prayers? I answer, it concerns not us to know that; it is sufficient to know, that God, who gave to his Prophets the Knowledge of things to come, and of the most hidden Secrets, can easily discover to the Saints

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Saints what passes in this World. 'Tis true, they know not of themselves our Wants, nor even our secret Desires and Prayers, yet these Prayers are not the less profitable to us, whether they be communicated to the Saints by the Commerce and Ministry of Angels, who, by the Testimony of Scripture, know what passes among us, being constituted by God's Appointment, *ministering Spirits, to concur to the Work of our Salvation*, Heb. i. 14. or whether God himself makes known to them our Desires in his infinite Essence, or in what manner he pleases.

Here then you see that there is nothing but what is very good, in the Worship and Invocation of Saints, provided we keep within the Limits prescribed us by the Church. She teaches with St. *Augustine*, that their Festivals are appointed, to beg of God that we may partake of their Merits, be animated by their great Examples, and helpt by their powerful Intercessions. Powerful, I say, in Grace and Merit, but not in Authority and Right. It is in this Spi-

rit you are to celebrate their Feasts ; and that you may the more closely follow the Intention of the Church, you may make use of her Prayers and her Office, and do only what she does, that is, content your self with returning Thanks to God, in time of Mass and your other Devotions, for the Mercies he has shewn to them, with meditating on their Virtues, and begging Grace to imitate them. Whatever has been introduced by any particular Devotion which the Church has not approved, that you ought to be aware of ; and without condemning either the Persons or Practices, unless they have been expressly condemned by an Ecclesiastical Censure, you are to avoid it, because it is enough that you follow the Church, whose Authority you may securely rely upon. Give no Credit to the Promises and Privileges which are said to be in certain Confraternities, when they are contrary to the Gospel. Never lay too much Stress upon the Power of Saints. Perswade not your self that 'tis enough for your Salvation to be devout

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devout to the Blessed Virgin, what Life soever you lead. Be assured the Blessed Virgin abhors the Devotion of all such as would make her a Party to their Crimes, by pretending that she will obtain Pardon for them whether they change their Lives or no; and that none who are devout to her can ever perish, how wicked soever they otherwise be: for if all that cry, *Lord, Lord, shall not be saved, but only such as do the Will of their Heavenly Father*, Mat. 7. 21. can you think it will fare better with those that call frequently upon the Blessed Virgin, without having the least regard to the keeping God's Commandments? she has her self laid down the Rule we ought to observe in our Devotion towards her, when she said, the first time she Prayed publicly to Christ her Son, in behalf of Men, *Whatsoever he shall tell you, that do ye*, John 2. 5. It is for such as these that she Prays, and for whom she is heard: not but that she Prays, and is sometimes heard, for the most obdurate Sinners; but her Request to God, is, that he will Convert
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them, that he will give them Time, Will and Grace to do worthy Fruits of Pennance, and not that he will let them live in their Sins and Disorders, till their Death, and then at last save them, or afford them time to receive Absolution before they Die, which they have neglected or profaned during their whole Lives.

C H A P. XXV.

Of some other Practices of Devotion.

OUR Piety being like a Fire which easily goes out, if it be not stirred up from time to time, and supplied with Fuel; therefore, besides those Exercises I have already set down, as hearing Mass every Day, saying certain Prayers Morning and Night, reading Pious Books, Working, Retirement, a Weekly Communion or oftner, as your Life shall render you worthy, leading a Life of Pennance as far as your Affairs

fairs and Health will permit : I say, besides all these excellent Means, I could wish you would accustom your self to watch half an Hour every Thursday Night, to read the Passion of our Lord, and to excite you to such a Compassion, Acknowledgment, Zeal, Fervour and Spirit of Repentance, as is due to the excessive Love of a God, mockt and affronted with all the Shame and Ignominy imaginable, beaten and abused with all possible Cruelty, and fastened to an infamous Cross by the blackest of all Injustices. It was said by a Prophet, *That the whole Earth was fallen into extream Desolation, because no one reflected upon himself,* Jer. 12. 12. upon his Obligations, upon the Benefits of God, upon his own Ingratitude. It is good then, in order to avoid this Evil, to set apart every Week some small Portion of your Time, to think upon the Passion of Jesus Christ; it is an Object so great, that no Creature is able to comprehend it. *St. Paul* studied no other Lesson than Christ Crucified : he pretended to know

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nothing but Christ Crucified ; he Preached nothing else but Christ Crucified. In this he placed all his Glory, all his Joy, all his Trust, nor did he ask any thing else for his Disciples but this Divine Knowledge. *For this Cause*, says he, *I bow my Knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that according to the Riches of his Glory he give you Power to be fortified by his Spirit in the inward Man, that Christ may dwell by Faith in your Hearts, and that being rooted and grounded in Charity, you may be able to comprehend with all the Saints, what is the Breadth and the Length, the Height and the Depth of this Mystery, Eph. 3. 14.* which was the Entertainment of *Moses and Elias* upon Mount *Thabor* : for the Gospel tells us, they Talked with Christ concerning his *Decease* which was to happen in *Hierusalem*, Luke 9. 31. This is the Entertainment of the Saints in Heaven, where they, for all Eternity, sing forth the Mercies of their God, and cry out without ceasing, prostrate before the Lamb, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to take the Book, and to open the*
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Seals thereof, because thou wast Slain, and hast Redeemed us to God in thy Blood, Apoc. 5. 9.

Twould therefore be a very Pious Practice to meditate on this Subject the Night wherein he suffered so much for us. The Reflections you shall make, will serve to confound your Cowardliness and Sloth; they will spurr you on to imitate so great an Example, to trample under Foot all the Glory of the World, to carry your Cross, to mortify and destroy in you the old Man, and to punish in your self the Sins which God has so severely punished in him, who voluntarily took them upon him.

I advise you likewise to bestow some part of the Five and Twentieth Day of every Month, to honour the Mystery of the Incarnation, which was accomplished that Day, according to the common Opinion of the Church. You may read what Saint *Luke* has left us upon that Subject, from whence you may gather excellent Instructions. The Incarnation being the very Ground of our Salvation, we cannot think too much upon
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on it; for in this is included all Religion. This Mystery supposes the Fall of the first Man, original Sin, the Impotence of our Will to do Good, the Corruption of our Heart, the Loss of Mankind, the Necessity of a Saviour, the Love of the Eternal Father, which was so great as to give us his own Son, the Obedience of this Divine Son, who came by the way of Humility, Poverty and Suffering, to draw us out of this Abyss, and who viewing the Depth of our Wounds, was pleased himself first to taste the Bitterness of the Remedies which were to cure them. They who are the least knowing in Religion, may easily find in these Holy Meditations, sufficient Matter to entertain themselves.

A third Practice of Devotion that I would exhort you to, is, to shut your self up one Day every Month, and to make a kind of Retreat. On this Day you may spend a longer time than ordinary in Prayer and Reading; you may employ the Morning in examining into your Life, and into the State of your Soul,
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to see if you are faithful to God, if you advance in Piety, if your Passions are weakened, if you grow strong in Vertue, if Concupiscence diminish, and Charity encrease; I would have all your Afternoons Exercises be upon Death: to which end, you may read what there is upon this Subject in the fourth Tome of the Moral Essays, and call to mind what is said in Scripture, that the frequent Consideration of Death is a most proper Means to hinder us from breaking the Law of God. *Remember*, says the Wise Man, *thy last end, and thou shalt not sin for ever*, Eccl. 7. 40. Look not upon it as a Thought too vulgar and mean for you: the Saints were of another Mind, who both by Word and Example approved and recommended it to their Disciples. *St. Ephrem* and *St. Bennet* thought it the Duty of the most perfect Monks, to live in a daily Meditation of Death, and Preparation for it. *St. Bernard* tells us the *Cistercian* Monks commonly made choice of the most unwholesome Air to dwell in, that by the want of
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Health they might always have Death in their Thoughts. *St. John Climacus* says, that as Bread of all Food is the most necessary, so of all Spiritual Exercises the Meditation of Death is the most profitable: it makes the most rigid Works of Penitence to be readily embraced, and the greatest Contempts and Humiliations to be received with Pleasure. But let us look a little into the particular Advantages that may be drawn from this Holy Meditation.

1. It helps to preserve the Innocence of our Souls, and powerfully excites in those who have lost it, a sincere Desire of recovering it by a worthy Repentance: it resists the Efforts of the Devil, and Allurements of the Flesh with so much Success, that a Heart truly possess'd with a Sense of Death may be said to be, in the strongest Temptations, like a Rock in the midst of a Tempest: for who dares to commit a wicked Action, if he were sure to Die the same Day, and that he should receive his deserved Punishment? it is hard for a Person to resolve

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olve upon offending the Majesty of God, while he thinks, that perhaps his Hand may be lifted up against him the very same moment to cut him off for his Crime. This puts me in mind of a Monk's Answer to the many Questions askt him by his Brethren when he was Dying: Pardon me, says he, if I can tell you nothing else, but that he who has the Thoughts of Death always imprinted in his Mind, shall never sin.

2. Another Advantage from the Consideration of Death, is, that there is nothing disengages us more effectually from the things of the Earth. For what can make Men so busy and sollicitous to build Houses, raise great Estates, seek Preferments and Riches, but the Desires they have of procuring their Satisfactions and Pleasures, and the Hopes of a long Enjoyment? It was this Thought made the Rich Man in the Gospel say to himself, after he had heapt up great Stores, *Thou hast much Goods laid up for many Years, take thy Rest, Eat, Drink, make good Chear: but God said to him, Thou Fool, this Night*

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Night they require thy Soul of thee, and the things that thou hast provided, whose shall they be? Luke 12. 19, 20. You see he is here put in mind of Death by God himself. Whoever lives in a perpetual Remembrance of Death, looks upon all Transitory things as if they were already past. He thinks he has truly lost all there is in the World for him to loose. He considers himself as one Dead amongst the Living, or rather as one Living amongst the Dead. He views all things with an Eye of Indifference and Insensibility. Life, Death, Sickness, Health, Rest, Labour, Shame and Contempt, touch him no more than if he were impassible. And if it happens through Frailty, which no Man can be exempted from, that his Heart begins to flag, and seems to rest upon any thing which he is no longer permitted to love, he immediately rises up against himself, and says, Fool that thou art, thy Soul will be required of thee; and perhaps this very Day thou wilt be hurried to the Tribunal of him who has forbid thee to love the World and all
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its Vanities. The Figure of the World passeth; let it pass, run not after it; court it not, if thou hast not a mind to pass and perish with it.

3. *Compunction of Heart* is a third Effect of the Meditation of Death. It brings often into a Man's Mind all the Circumstances which ought to accompany him in that Hour. He imagines with *St. Jerome*, that he hears the terrible Sound of that Trumpet which shall one Day rouse all Mankind out of their Graves with this dreadful Summons; *Arise ye Dead, come and appear before the Tribunal of Jesus Christ, there to receive your eternal Doom.* He considers the strict Account that will be demanded of him by God, of all his Actions, and of all the Graces which he has abused. He sees how infinite is the Number of his Sins, and even those which separately and apart were hardly perceptible to him, yet altogether appear like Mountains; such a Multitude of idle Words, such a Crowd of Distractions and vain Thoughts, not one of which can escape

cape either the Knowledge or Justice of God. He has a full view of all that he ever did or thought contrary to his Duty, or the Sanctity of his Religion. He represents to himself whole Troops of Devils suggesting to him Crimes, and ready to accuse him even of Faults which he never committed. He sets before his Eyes those devouring Flames of Fire, those bottomless Abysses of Darknes and Horror, ready gaping to receive all those that shall be thrown into them. All these terrible Objects present themselves to him that meditates on Death; they fail not to make an Impression on his Mind and Senses, and if he leads not a very Christian Life, they put him in a Fright, and pierce him to the very Bones, and through the Mercy of God, they make him resolve upon entering into a more holy and regular way.

4. A fourth Benefit from the frequent Consideration of Death, is, that thereby we become more familiar with it, and dispose our selves to receive it with less Fear when it approaches. 'How are we infatuated,

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‘crys St. *Eucherius* ? nothing is so
‘often exposed to our Sight as Death,
‘and yet there is nothing we so easi-
‘ly forget. It is the Road through
‘which all Men must pass ; our Fa-
‘thers have gone first, and we shall
‘go after them, and our Posterity
‘will follow us. This Thought of
‘our Mortal State, is a Voice which
‘crys Night and Day in our Ears,
‘that the end of our Life advanceth,
‘and that the longer we live, the
‘nearer it approacheth. Let us there-
‘fore prepare for this latter Day, not
‘knowing but it may be at hand :
‘let us accustom our selves to look to
‘the end of our Course, for the best
‘Remedy against the Fear of Death
‘when it comes, is, to fear it before
‘it comes, and to prevent those
‘things which render its Approach
‘so terrible. All these Reasons
should incline you once a Month to
bestow a little longer time than or-
dinary on this most serious and ne-
cessary Thought : and you will do
well to conclude this Exercise with
reciting the Prayers appointed for
Agonizing Persons, which you may
endeavour

endeavour to do with the same Fer-
vour, as if you were upon your
Death-bed.

C H A P. XXVI.

Of Christian Fear and Humility.

WHAT has been already said, is
very proper to inspire both Fear
and Humility; but these two Dispo-
sitions being so extreamly necessary
in a Spiritual Life, I cannot forbear
speaking of them more at large. The
Holy Scripture sufficiently declares
the Necessity of them, when it says,
*That he who is void of Fear, cannot be
justified; that Fear is the beginning
of Wisdom, and of Christian-justice;
that he is blessed who fears God; that
nothing can either move or trouble him,
because the Lord is his Hope; that God
supports in time of Temptation those
who fear him, and preserves them from
the Evils wherewith they are threatned,*
Eccl. i. 28. All these Divine Ora-
cles were confirmed by Jesus Christ,
when

when he said to his Apostles, *I will tell you, my Friends, whom you ought to fear ; fear him who after having killed the Body, hath also Power to cast into Hell, Luke 12. 4, 5.* 'Tis observable this Instruction is not here given by our Saviour to great Sinners, but to Apostles, and to whom he thought such Advice no ways lessening or improper. The Council of *Trent* teacheth, that 'tis by the Fear of God's Judgments the Holy Ghost produceth in the Hearts of Sinners the first Thoughts and the first Desires of Conversion. 'Tis by this Fear that he prevents and stops them in the Career of their Iniquities, that he strikes them, perplexes and overturns them, and after having filled them with Terrour, he forceth from them these piercing Crys ; *Lord, who is he that knows the Weight of thy Indignation ? and who is able to comprehend the Greatness of thy Wrath ? Psal. 89. 11.* Hence the Sinner proceeds to the Hopes of obtaining Mercy through the Merits of Jesus Christ : he begins to love him as the Source of all Justice, and to look with Horrour

roure on all those criminal Actions by which he has had the Misfortune to displease and offend him. See here the Effect of the Fear of God, and how profitable it is. ' For my ' part, says *St. Bernard*, I have found ' nothing more powerful to acquire ' Grace, to preserve and recover it, ' than to keep my self in the Pre- ' sence of God at all times, in the ' Lowliness of Fear, and not in the ' height of Pride, because that Man ' is happy that feareth always. Be ' afraid, says he, when Grace is gi- ' ven you, when it is withdrawn ' from you, and when it is rendered ' to you again ; and let these Three ' Fears incessantly succeed each other. *St. Bernard* here takes notice of some of the Reasons and Motives for a Christian's Fear ; but for your farther Instruction, I shall set down others.

1. The first may be taken from this Text of Scripture ; *No Man knows if he is worthy of Love or Hatred*, Eccl. 9. 1. whether he shall be Saved or Damned, whether he be in a State of Grace or Sin ; and this ter-
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rible Uncertainty proves the greatest Torment and Affliction imaginable to the Children of God : for as they most tenderly love him, they prefer his Love before all things, and yet know not whether they are worthy of it or no. They know not their own Hearts. And although they had nothing to accuse themselves of, as *St. Paul* says of himself; yet were they not therefore in any Assurance of their Justification, because they know there are in the Heart of Man many hidden and impenetrable Recesses.

2. The second Reason hath Relation to those who have been guilty of Mortal Sin. They know they have deserved Hell, but know not whether their Repentance hath been sincere, or any wise proportioned to their Crimes : if their Conscience seems easy upon it, it may give them some Hopes ; but they can never (without a particular Revelation) know certainly whether their Sins are forgiven them or no. So that they ought always to have their Sins in view, and this only Thought in their

their Minds; Has God forgiven me? have I appeased his Anger? has my Redeemer cast an Eye of Pity on me? will he vouchsafe to apply to me the Merits of his Sacred Blood? Such was the Disposition of those admirable Penitents mentioned by St. *John Climacus*, in his *Fifth Degree*, where, speaking of their strange Austerities, he says they used thus to address themselves to God, or to each other. One would say, 'Open unto us, O my God; open unto us, through thy Mercy, that blessed Gate which, by our Sins, we have shut against us. Another, Shew us only thy Countenance, and we shall be safe. Another, Let thy Light shine upon us poor miserable Wretches, overspread with Darkness and the Shadow of Death. Another, Let thy Mercy speedily overtake us, O Lord; for our Salvation is lost, our Hope is weakened, our Courage is sunk. Some would say, Will our Lord look upon us any more? and others, How shall we be discharged of the Weight of our Debts and Offences? Will the Lord comfort us any more? when will he say to us,

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‘ who are in the Bonds of Sin, I give
 ‘ you your Liberty ? We who are in the
 ‘ Grave of Repentance, will he bid us
 ‘ one Day go forth ? Do our Cries as-
 ‘ cend up to the Ears of our Lord ?
 ‘ When at any time they were sit-
 ‘ ting together, they had always
 ‘ Death before their Eyes, and would
 ‘ say one to another, What will become
 ‘ of us in this last Moment of our Life ?
 ‘ what Judgment shall we have pronoun-
 ‘ ced upon us ? what End shall we make ?
 ‘ Shall Sinners covered with Darknes
 ‘ and Confusion, shall poor, miserable
 ‘ Criminals find Mercy ? Has our
 ‘ Prayer had Force enough to reach up
 ‘ to the Throne of our Lord ? or has it
 ‘ been rejected with Scorn ?

‘ When any one of their Compa-
 ‘ nions lay at the Point of Death,
 ‘ and that he had his Judgement
 ‘ free, they would all come about
 ‘ him, and with great Zeal and
 ‘ Concern would say to him : How
 ‘ do you find your self Dear Brother
 ‘ and Companion in our Miseries and
 ‘ Labours ? what do you say now ? what
 ‘ hopes have you ? what do you think ?
 ‘ will you be able to Obtain what you
 M ‘ have

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‘ have sought after with so much Pains,
 ‘ or has it been all Lost-Labour ? have
 ‘ you received an absolute assurance of
 ‘ your Salvation, or have you only an
 ‘ uncertain Hope ? have you not heard
 ‘ in the bottom of your Heart a Voice
 ‘ that tells you, Now you are Cured, or,
 ‘ your Sins are forgiven, or your Faith
 ‘ hath saved you ? Or do you still hear
 ‘ this terrible Voice ; Let the Sinners be
 ‘ dragged into Hell ; or this of the Gos-
 ‘ pel ; Let him be bound Hand and Foot
 ‘ and thrown into utter Darknes ; or this
 ‘ other of the Prophet ; Let this wicked
 ‘ one be taken away, that he may not
 ‘ see the Glory of God ? Such were the
 Sentiments of these blessed Crimi-
 nals, and I wish I could say the
 same of all other Penitents. But, a-
 las ! we live in an Age where nothing
 is thought more easy than to be re-
 conciled with God, and where very
 slight Pennances will hardly be re-
 ceived, and performed for very great
 Sins.

The third Reason that obliges us
 to live in Fear, hath respect even to
 the most Just, to whom St. Paul says ;
Work out your Salvation with fear and
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trembling ; for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish according to his good Pleasure. Phil. 2. 12. This Reason being drawn from the impenetrable Abyfs of God's Judgements, I intend not to dwell upon it, lest I may throw you into an excessive Fear : I shall only tell you that none will be saved but those who persevere to the end ; and no Man is sure that he shall persevere. Perseverance is a special gift of God, says the Council of Trent, and it is of this Gift more than any other, that these Words of Scripture are to be understood ; *I will shew Mercy to whom I will shew Mercy : therefore it is not of the Willer nor the Runner, but of God that sheweth Mercy*, Rom. 9. 15. 16. And these : *It is by Grace you are saved through Faith, and that not of your selves ; for it is the Gift of God, not of Works, that no Man may glory. For we are his Work, Created in Christ Jesus in good Works, which God hath prepared that we should walk in them*, Eph. 2. 8. But how should we be assured of our Perseverance, when we know not the present State

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of our Hearts? Who hath told us that we lead a Life good enough to be rewarded at the Hands of God? Woe, says St. *Augustine*, to the most Innocent, if thou Judgest without Mercy. *Who is he*, saith David, *that knoweth all his Sins? Cleanse me, O God, from my Secret Faults, and from other Mens Sins deliver thy Servant*, Pl. 18. 13. *Enter not into Judgement with thy Servant, because no Man living shall be Justified in thy Sight*, ch. 142. 2. Who would not tremble to hear *Job* declare, (whom God himself had commended) that he lived in a perpetual Apprehension of God's Judgments, that he looked upon them as raging Billows ready to fall upon his Head, and that he was not able to support the Weight of his Anger, ch. 31. 23. *I trembled*, says he, *for all my Actions, knowing thou dost not pardon those that Sin*, ch. 9. 28. Who can without trembling see the Royal Prophet represent himself as a Man frightened? who perceiveth Mountains of Sins over his Head, and is in dread of being overtaken by them? *The Impressions of thy Anger*

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Anger says he, *have peirced my Mind,* and *I have been Struck with Fear at the Sight of thy Judgements,* Ps. 87 v. 7. Who would not tremble that reads in *Isaiah, Our Holiness, Lord, compared with thine, is but as foul Linnen,* ch. 64. 6. and in *St. Gregory the Pope ; If we place our Justice near the Justice of God, it will appear no better than Iniquity.* Who can, without trembling, read in the *Life of St. Hilarion* how great his Fear was at the Point of Death, when, for his Encouragement, he was forced to say to himself, *Go forth my Soul, why art thou afraid ? Thou hast served thy God this Threescore and Ten Years, and art thou still afraid to appear before him ? And in the Life of St. Arsenius, that famous Hermit, who being asked at his Death, why he Wept ? and if he was afraid to Die ? he answered, yes, truly, he was afraid to Die, and never was without that Fear, since he quitted the World.* And in that of *St. Martin, who at the Hour of his Death saw the Devil at his Bed-side, and was obliged to drive him away.*

Live then in Fear and Humility : never say, under Pretence of pursuing more noble, pure and elevated ways, that the Sight and Consideration of God's Judgements work no good Effect upon you, and that you find it more agreeable to you, to go to him by the way of Charity and Love, than that of Fear ; and to act rather in Quality of a Child than Slave : for it is not pretended that your Fear be quite dry, barren and without Love ; such a Fear indeed may make one abstain from Sin , but doth not hinder one from loving it , or having a will to commit it. You ought at the same time that you dread the terrible Arm that punisheth Sin, to adore the Hand of Mercy, that distributeth Rewards and Crowns. Let both the Goodness and Justice of your God be always in your View ; let your Love accompany your Fear, let them both joyn to defend you ; in fine, let your Charity excite you to love him who alone is able to protect you against all the Evils before you, and without whose Love all your Fears are vain and fruitless. But be

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sure you perswade not your self that you have arrived to such a Stock of Vertue, as to stand no longer in need of Fear, and deceive not your self by passing too hasty a Judgement on your State, in attributing to your self a greater Perfection than you have: for if the Conduct of such as these be narrowly lookt into, there will appear for the most part nothing but a false Piety, without either Charity or Fear. And for you whose Passions are strong and lively, who find your selves engaged in Intestine Wars, who have powerful Enemies to encounter, you cannot provide your selves too great a Stock, both of Fear and Love, for your Defence; you would do well to take into your Consideration the Severity and Justice of God, as well as his Goodness and Clemency. *St. Chrysostome* scruples not to say, that the Prospect of Heil is a more powerful Help to suppress Vice in us, than that of Paradise, because the Fear of Evil makes a deeper Impression on our Minds than the Promise of Good. And I am confident there are many

that would despise the Joys of Heaven, could they be assured to escape the Pains of Hell.

Never then be without Fear for your Salvation ; Watch, Pray, and live in a Holy Solitude. Fear your Sins, whose Number is so great, and Enormity so dreadful. Fear even your good Works, with which you have mixt so much Self-Love, Vanity and other Defects. Fear those good Actions you might have done, and did not, through want of Zeal for God's Honour, and tremble for all other Neglects of your Duty. Is there any Creature more miserable than Man ? he shall be Judged upon the Evil he hath done, upon the Good he hath not done, and ought to have done, and upon what he hath ill done, and referred not to the Glory of God, but his own Satisfaction. If he is in Mortal Sin, he hath then every thing to fear, Death, God's Judgement, and his own Corruption. If he is in the State of Grace, 'tis more than he knows ; and should he know it, he could not answer for his Fidelity one Moment.

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If he is now a good Man, he may become wicked ; if he stands, he may fall : there is nothing but the Grace of God that can support him, and this Grace requires so great a Co-operation and Fidelity, that a very small Failing sometimes is enough to deprive us of the Help it gives to every particular Action. *Blessed then, I must again repeat it, is he that feareth always,* Prov. 28. 14. and bendeth his whole Endeavours to put himself in such a State wherein he hath nothing more to fear.

C H A P. XXVII.

Of Confidence in G O D.

I Place Confidence in God immediately after Fear, because methinks the one ought never to go without the other. Confidence without Fear degenerates into Presumption, and Fear without Confidence turns to Despair. If we have great Subjects of Fear, we have no less

M 5 Grounds

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Grounds of Hope. We have, first, the Assurances God has given us in many places of Holy Writ, that he is our Father, that he looks upon us as his Children, that he knows and pities our Weakness, that he wills not the Death of a Sinner, but that he be converted and live; that his Mercies are infinite, that he takes Delight in Pardoning, and that he hates not his own Works. We have, secondly, his Promises, whereby he engageth himself to pardon us, provided we turn to him and repent. We have, thirdly, most admirable Pledges of his Goodness, which he hath expressly given us to cure us of our Distrusts, and dissipate our Fears; he hath given us his Son Jesus Christ, his Incarnation, his Birth, his Life, his Death, his Resurrection, his Ascension. *What shall we then say, says St. Paul, to all these things? If God be for us, who is against us? He that spared not also his own Son, but for us all delivered him; how hath he not also with him given us all things?* Rom. 8. 21. We have, fourthly, Baptism, by which he hath received us into his

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his Alliance, and put us into a State of Salvation. We have, fifthly, the other Sacraments, whereby he communicates to us his Grace and the Benefit of his Passion. We have, sixthly, many particular Instances of his Love; to have a sincere Desire to be saved, to have a sufficient Knowledge of God's Law, to live in a time of Light, where solid and wholsome Instructions may be had both by Word and Writing, are so many Signs of Mercy. We have, seventhly, a Command left us by Jesus Christ, to Pray in his Name. with a Promise that we shall infallibly be heard. We have, lastly, the Prayers of Christ himself, who sits at the Right Hand of the Father in the highest Heavens, where he interceeds for us, and the Voice of that adorable Blood speaks more advantageously for us, than did the Blood of *Abel*, which cried out for Vengeance, while that of Jesus Christ pleads for Mercy.

Art thou a Sinner? Christ came to save Sinners. If we had not been sick, the Physician would not have
come

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Art thou a Sinner? Christ came to save Sinners. If we had not been sick, the Physician would not have
come

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come to us. If we had not been Enemies of God, our powerful Mediator Jesus Christ could not so well have made known his infinite Love, which much better appears in the Reconciliation of Sinners, than in the Salvation of the Just. Nothing is so precious to him as the Name of Jesus, and it is to Sinners, if I dare say so, that this is owing. For if the Sheep had never run astray, the good Shepherd had never come to seek it. 'Tis true, this Quality of Saviour hath cost him very dear, since he gave to the last drop of his Blood for the Purchase: but even that serves to encreate our Hope. The more our Souls have cost him, the more is he interested in our Salvation. For if a powerful rich Man will not easily suffer an Estate to be taken from him which he hath an Affection for, and on which he hath laid out great Summs of Money; can Jesus Christ be willing that a poor Soul should be lost which hath cost him all his Blood? *Christ hath loved me, says St. Paul, and hath delivered himself for me to Death, Gal. 2. 20.*

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The Spiritual Director. 253

Behold here the Ground of my Hope! I know the Price of my Redemption, I receive it in the blessed Eucharist. With such a Support as this, I fear neither the Malice of my Enemies, nor my own Sins, because Christ hath paid my Ransome for me upon the Cross, and I know his Blood can cleanse me from all Sin. *My little Children*, says St. John, *these things I write to you, that you sin not: but if any Man shall sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just; and he is the Propitiation for our Sins, and not for ours only, but for the whole Worlds, 1 John 1. 7.*

I could wish, that weak and fearful Souls would often read these places of Holy Scripture, that they may not be so easily discouraged at the Experience of their Failings. There are too many who give way to this Temptation, and think themselves lost, because they are apt sometimes to fall. Let them hearken to St. John Climacus; 'Be not surprized, says he, that you daily relapse into the same Faults, let not that make you abandon the ways

' ways of God, but continue firm
 ' and vigorous in his Service, and
 ' the Angel that protects you will
 ' have Respect to your Constancy
 ' and Patience. While a Wound is
 ' yet fresh and bloody, it admits of
 ' an easy Cure. After we have fal-
 ' len into any Disorder, we are, a-
 ' bove all, to defend our selves a-
 ' gainst the Devil of Melancholy and
 ' Dejection, because before we sin
 ' our Enemy commonly represents
 ' God to us, as all-merciful, and af-
 ' terwards he paints him most terri-
 ' ble and merciless. Give not there-
 ' fore way to the Suggestions of your
 ' Adversary, when having fallen in-
 ' to a grievous Fault, and tempted
 ' to commit other lesser ones, he bids
 ' you guard your self against the for-
 ' mer, but for the rest, they are no-
 ' thing. For your Care and Vigi-
 ' lance in avoiding these, are pow-
 ' erful Means to soften and appease
 ' the Fury of your provoked Judge.
 Nothing can equal the Mercies of
 God : nothing can surmount them.
 Whoever therefore despairs, becomes
 his own Murtherer. Never despair
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then, how weak and infirm soever you be. When you are fallen, be not astonished at it: is it a Wonder to see a Leaf fall? Have Recourse to Jesus Christ immediately after a Temptation has overthrown you; shew him your Wound, and tell him, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole*, Mat. 8. 2. Betake your self to Tears and Pennance; weep, sigh, and never rest till Grace has raised you up again, and then return to the Fight with greater Courage and more Humility. Learn from your Falls to distrust your self, but whatever happens, never distrust your God.

If you live Upright, and walk in the Way of the Gospel, what is it that you may not expect from the Goodness and Bounty of Jesus Christ? He had pity on you when you were gone astray, and do you think he will abandon you now that you are in the right way? He sought you when you thought not on him, will he now reject you when you think on nothing else, and when you detest the time you employ on any other

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Thoughts. 'Tis true you are neither sure of your Predestination, nor of your Perseverance: But, for your Comfort, I must tell you; in the first place, you are, while you live well, in the Rank of those among whom are found the greatest number of the Elect: there are few of them to be found among the Wicked, as there are few Reprobates among the Good. I go yet farther, and dare presume to say, that there are more of the Predestinate among the Wicked, than there are Reprobates among the Good, because Jesus Christ came not to destroy, but to save, and his Mercies are above all his Works. And thence comes that Goodness, that Patience, that Longanimity which he useth towards Sinners, not willing that any one perish, but that all return to him through Penitence. The second thing I have to tell you; is, that Perseverance is generally bestowed on a good Life; it is indeed what in Strictness we cannot merit; but 'tis also certain, that our Life and Death are most commonly of a piece. We see few of the Wicked end like the Good Thief,

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Thief, and few of the Just Die like Judas. Although Grace is what we cannot merit, yet the good use of one Grace draws down a new one, and if we prove faithful to that, we still receive another, and another, of which may be compos'd a Chain reaching from the beginning of our Conversion to our Death. Wherefore St. Peter said to the Faithful; *Labour the more, Brethren, that by good Works you may make your Vocation and Election sure; for, doing these things, you shall not Sin at any time; for so there shall be ministred to you abundantly an entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. 10. 11.* In the third place, I must tell you, that the Apostles have always look'd upon the true Christians as God's Elect, have called them by that Name, and have supposed them to be always preserved from the Corruption of this World, and transferred to the Kingdom of Love, delivered from the Power of Darkness, and restored to Light, Col. 1. 13. *Called to the same Inheritance as the Jews, made Members of the same Body,*

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Body, and rendred Partakers of the same Promise of God through Jesus Christ, Eph. 3. 6.

None then ought to be without Confidence. Jesus Christ bears a Name that will suffer none whomsoever to despair: the greatest Sinners find Comfort in it, because superabundant Grace is poured down even upon those in whom Sin has most abounded. There is no Disease incurable to an all-powerful Physitian, and how Dead soever a Soul may be, if Jesus Christ is pleased to raise it again, it depends only on him; because *he has the Keys of Life and Death, Apoc. 1. 18.* The Just find in him a wonderful Assurance. *My well Beloved, says St. John, if our Hearts condemn us not, we have Assurance before God, and whatsoever we ask of him that we shall receive, because we keep his Commandments, and do that which is agreeable in his Sight. 1. 2, 28.*

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C H A P. XXVIII.

Of the Knowledge of ones Self.

THERE is hardly a Precept of more Importance than that which obliges us to labour in the Knowledge of our selves. Whether we look upon our selves with Regard to God or Men, or with Relation to our selves, this Knowledge is perfectly necessary for us: this it is that discovers to us the Greatness of God, and our own Baseness, the Duties we owe him, and the Misery of such as neglect them: this is that which carries the Lamp of Truth into the most secret Recesses of our Heart, and exposes to open Day-light all its Weaknesses, its Injustices, its evil Desires, its Vanity, and that Fund of Self-love which corrupts our best Actions. For in the Christian Life, it is not sufficient that our Actions be good, but that they be also well done. In every Action, says St. *Augustine*, there is a Body and a Soul: the exterior part is the Body of it, and the

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the end is the Soul. Now, if an ill Intention be joined to a good Action, it thereby becomes evil, because God judges of our Works by our Hearts: so that if a Man should give an Alms to a poor Girl with a Design to Debauch her, who questions but this is a most detestable Action, altho' the Alms in its self be an excellent thing? It is not then enough that we consider the Gross of our Actions, but we must examine well into the Motives. We are obliged by the Law of Charity to do all for the Love of God; and St. Paul commands it in expresse Terms, when he says, *Whatsoever you do in Word or in Work, whether you Eat or Drink, or whatever else you do, let it be done in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, giving Thanks by him to God the Father,* Col. 3. 17. There is no other way of pleasing God but this.

St. August. ' Whatever we do for his
' Glory, is good. What-
' ever we do to satisfy our selves, or
' through Vanity, or Self-love, or to
' please Men without referring it to
' God, is evil: it proceeds from Con-
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‘ cupiscence, which is the only thing
‘ the Scripture forbids; it is opposite
‘ to Charity, which is the only thing
‘ the Scripture commands: for to
‘ these two may be reduced all the
‘ Precepts contained in the Holy
‘ Scripture. These are the two ge-
‘ neral Principles by which Mens
‘ Morals are to be regulated, and all
‘ Cases of Conscience decided. To
‘ know which of these it is we fol-
‘ low in the Practice, we must take
‘ Pains to know our selves, to watch
‘ with great Attention upon the
‘ Motions of our Hearts, and upon
‘ our Actions: for it frequently hap-
‘ pens, says St. *Gregory*, that the Soul
‘ deceives her self, and imagins that
‘ she loves, amongst the things of
‘ God, what in effect she loves not,
‘ and that she loves not of the things
‘ of the World, what in Reality she
‘ doth love. How many are there
‘ who think they do all for the Glory
‘ of God, while they act only for them-
‘ selves, and to whom these Words of
‘ the Apocalyps might be applied: *I*
am rich, say you, I have plenty of all
things, I want nothing; and you know

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not that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.

We ought, in regard of our Neighbour, to study the Knowledge of our selves, to the end that we may not rashly engage our selves in Employments, in Charges, in States that require a greater Capacity, or a greater Light, more Steadiness, or more Humility than we are Masters of. How many have entered into Religion, taken Holy Orders upon them, and bound themselves by Vows, who have neither Vertue, Courage, Patience nor Purity enough to acquit the Obligations of such sublime States? They will not take time to know and prove themselves, but hearken to the first Motions of a passing and unsettled Devotion. They easily engage themselves in a State of Life which requires great Courage, Humility, Holiness and Constancy: and no sooner are they entered into it, but they begin to open their Eyes, and see that they have charged themselves with too heavy a Burthen, and much above their Strength. They find themselves as it were alone, surrounded

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rounded with a Crowd of Passions, which grow stronger with their Years; and thus too late repent a Rashness so much the more dreadful as it is without Remedy. Hence come Scandals, Apostacies, the falling of the Stones of the Sanctuary, and the Church's Tears, who sees her self dishonoured by those that ought to spread her Glory, and who ought to make up the most illustrious part of the Fold of Jesus Christ. Did we but know our selves well before we Embark on such great Enterprizes, we should not see so much Disorder in the Conditions of the World, and of the Church. He that is now a Priest and Spiritual Physician, would probably be contented with the Charge of looking after Corporal Diseases. The Preacher who dishonours the Pulpit with his profane Eloquence, would do Wonders at the Barr. He that is now a Magistrate, and sits Judge of the Estates, Honours and Lives of Men, would betake himself to a Country Life, being capable of nothing else. He that has vowed Continence, would

would have Married, and had done better. Therefore all that have not yet made choice of their State, ought to take a long time of Tryal, to study thoroughly their ~~Hearts~~, to weigh well their Strength, ~~to sit down~~, as the Gospel says, *and count, to see*, Luke 14. 28. if they have the necessary Talents, and the Capacity requisite for that State which they are desirous to embrace. If it is Priesthood ~~or~~ a Religious Life they are about to engage in, I conjure them not to be too hastily, but to take time to Pray, to prove themselves, to examine their Tempers and Constitutions, because these are two of the most elevated States, and there is nothing so difficult as to undergo them. *All*, says our Saviour, *are not capable of this Resolution, but they only to whom it is given*, Mat. 19. 11. We cannot judge of the Success of so great an Undertaking, by the present Disposition we find our selves in, because that will not last always. There needs but a little Conversation, a Lecture, a Tye of Friendship, and that seemingly Spiritual in the beginning, to o-
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verthrow a Soul which one would have thought invincible. I advise you therefore to take time to be assured of the Will of God.

If you live in the World with a Desire to renounce Marriage, the better to serve God in the Liberty of a Continent Life, yet do not engage your self by Vow. Man is so inconstant in himself, that he ought to be afraid of all Engagements that are no better grounded than on a passing Devotion, least he may come to repent, and so be obliged to have Recourse to Dispensations; and then what Scandal must it give to all who know of such Engagements? what cause of Scruples and Fears would it give you? your Conscience would be always telling you, *The imprudent and faithless Promise displeaseth God. Accomplish then the Vow which you have made, for it is much better not to make Vows, than when they are made, not to perform them,* Eccl. 5. 4. Thus you see of what Importance the Knowledge of ones self is. It hinders us from running into Labyrinths,
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out of which we should not be able to deliver our selves.

C H A P. XXIX.

Of other Advantages from this Knowledge.

BESIDES all these Benefits already mentioned, I may affirm it to be the Foundation of all other Vertues: it is the Mother of Humility, or rather Humility is nothing else but the Knowledge of our Sins, of our Miseries, of our Nothing, which makes us appear contemptible in our own Eyes, and judge our selves worthy of all manner of Disgraces. Humility, says St. *Augustine*, consists in the true Knowledge of our selves. This it is that hinders us from advancing our selves above our Neighbours, which cannot proceed but from a great Forgetfulness of our selves: for certainly it would appear ridiculous for a Man, who himself is up to the Ears in Dirt and Filth, to reproach

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reproach or find fault with another for having a little Spot upon his Cloths. And this would be the Idea we should have of our own Souls, had we but a true Knowledge of them. We may believe, that in general all Men are weak, and subject to Sin; but still we ought to believe, that none are more weak, and none more sinful than our selves: for supposing we have never been guilty of very gross Crimes, yet we might have been, we have the Root of them in our Hearts, and 'tis God alone has hindred their Budding forth. The Weight of our Corruption was enough to drag us along, had not his Hand withheld us, and his Grace preserved us; 'twas he took away the Occasions and Objects which might have seduced us, and in that respect we become accountable to him even for the Sins we have not committed.

The Knowledge of our selves renders us Equitable and Just in all our Dealings: It bids us *not do to others what we would not that others should do to us*: Math. 7. 12. it dispels all

the Clouds, which Self-Love brings to obscure this Rule in all Occasions where Interest is concerned : it prevents all bitter Complaints for Injuries received, and hard Judgements passed upon us, convincing us, that we often treat others in the same manner without heed or scruple. This Knowledge effectually suppresses Pride, with all the Vices arising from it. A Man that truly knows himself, can never be Jealous, because he is convinced he merits nothing, and therefore whatever Honour is paid to another, he thinks none at all is due to him : he is neither peevish nor revengeful, because the small Esteem he has of himself, makes him account as little, the Injuries he receives : he can hate nobody, because whatever Faults he spies in others, he discovers the Source of them in himself, and perhaps something worse : and as he would not be hated for his own Faults, so he is careful not to hate or despise others : he is not at all Ambitious, nor doth he trouble himself to form great designs of raising his Fortune
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in the World, because he thinks himself unfit for great Employments; besides, he looks upon high Dignities and Preferments, as Stations rather capable of frightening than tempting a true Disciple of Jesus Christ: he finds that his Passions would render him more unhappy in such great Posts, that his Desires would be more unbounded, that he should be apt to commit more scandalous Faults, that his Heart would be equally puffed up with his Fortune, and that he should find his Ruine where others seek their Establishment. The Knowledge of our selves makes us Patient in Poverty, in Sicknes, in all Afflictions, because it teaches us, that they are just, that they bear some Proportion with our inward Evils, and may serve as a Remedy for them. It convinces us that Prosperity is not our due; that it would prove rather pernicious than profitable for us, and that Adversity is our Portion, and the only thing that God owes us.

Labour then to acquire this Knowledge, which may be called the only necessary one. Know that the

Sign of Reprobation in this Life, is not to see ones self, and to take Pains not to know ones self. Therefore often beg of God, with *David*, *That he will enlighten your Eyes, that you may not sleep in the Sleep of Death*, Psal. 12. 4. The Condition into which a Soul is reduced by Mortal Sin, is so dreadful, that she cannot endure the Sight of it. And therefore it is that Sinners are inclined to draw a Veil before their Eyes: some endeavour to stifle the Light that condemns their Disorders, and frame loose Maxims to justify themselves in their own Eyes. Instead of guiding themselves by the Rules of the Gospel, and correcting their Inclinations upon its Maxims, they would bring the Gospel to favour their Passions. *They call good that which is evil, and to Darknes give the Name of Light*, Isa. 5. 20. They will have it, (contrary to the express Word of Jesus Christ) that the broad Way does not lead to Perdition, and that Sins do not exclude the Kingdom of Heaven, altho' *St. Paul* has so often told us the contrary. Others there
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are, who though they trample not upon the Gospel, yet never regard how to square their Lives by it; they go on in their own Road, hardly ever think of what's to come, they content themselves with depending on the Mercies of God, and under Pretence that he made not Men to Damn them, they flatter themselves that they are in no Danger; they look upon themselves as amongst a Crowd of Offenders, and imagine that with such an infinite Number they cannot perish. There are some who attribute to themselves Motives and Intentions which they have not, and will not see those they have. So that making a false Judgement of their Actions, they deceive themselves through the whole Course of their Lives, by this voluntary Delusion. Beg of God that he will deliver you from this Blindness, and see that you embrace all the Means that may help you to acquire this precious Knowledge of your self.

C H A P. XXX.

*How to acquire the Knowledge of
ones self.*

ONE of the principal Means to acquire this Knowledge, is an **Examen** of Conscience, not a slight and superficial one, but a diligent Search, not only into our daily Faults, but also into our evil Inclinations, and above all into the predominant Affection of our Hearts; for thus we shall find out some Vice or other that hath infected our whole Life, hath given Rise to our Disorders, and which we have not been able so entirely to destroy, but that it hath from time to time attacked, and perhaps overcome us. How deplorable a thing it is to see, that all our good Desires, all our Endeavours, and even all our Works of Penance, are not able to rid us of such an importunate Enemy. They who are strongly inclined to Impurity, can never so absolutely free themselves from

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from it, but that this corrupt Inclination will sometimes be giving them a new Exercise, and perhaps a new Subject of Grief. The same thing may be said of Gluttony, Vanity, Sloth, Detraction, and generally of all other Vices.

2. Another good way to know our selves, is, to have a faithful Friend to tell us our Faults, because the Eyes of another can better discover than our own what is blameable in our Conduct, and disagreeable in our Humour. Our Confessor might do this good Office for us, if he were well enough acquainted with us, but he, of all our Friends, commonly knows us the least, because he seldom sees us but in a place where we for the most part disguise our selves, and know it not. We hardly take notice to him of any other Faults but those to which we are the least affected. And for those we love and cannot think of quitting, we either suppose them Innocent, or at least but Venial Sins, and consequently that we are not obliged to forsake them. I could wish therefore that

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every one had in his own Family or Neighbourhood, a Friend truly Christian, Prudent, Wise, Sincere, and full of Zeal, to whom full Power were given to advertise and reprove him whenever he perceived him failing in his Duty. This is what hath been both practised and approved by *St. Thomas of Canterbury, St. Charles,* and other Holy Bishops.

3. A third Means to come to the Knowledge of our selves, is, to draw Profit from the Judgments and Discourses of others, to be glad to be informed by them, to testify our Obligation to those who have had this Charity for us; and that the greatest Kindness they can do us, is, to let us know our Faults. This made even some Philosophers say, that our Enemies often proved more serviceable to us than our Friends, because they tell, without Ceremony or Mincing the Matter, all the Ill they know of us; and where's the harm to us to be enlightned by the Fire of their Fury, and excited by the Shame of their Reproaches, to Correct our Faults. It was thus that the Mother

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of St. *Augustine* was brought to curb the Inclination she had to drink Wine. ‘ For, *Conf.lib.9.* notwithstanding the *ch. 8.* ‘ Care of a discreet Governor, whom her Parents had placed over her, to bring her up in the ‘ Fear of God, she accustomed her ‘ self, every time she was sent to ‘ draw Wine for the Family, to ‘ drink some her self. She drank but ‘ a very little at the first; but, as ‘ they who neglect small Faults, easily fall into greater, she found at length she began to love Wine, ‘ and full Brimmers would go down ‘ with her. Perhaps she had never ‘ broken her self of this Fault, had ‘ she not been extremely piqued, by ‘ an Affront she received from a Servant, that usually went into the ‘ Cellar with her: for upon a Quarrel arising between them, the Servant in a great Heat reproached her ‘ for Drinking, and called her Sot. ‘ This single Word pierced her to the ‘ Soul, opened her Eyes, and seeing ‘ what a shameful Vice she was reviled withal, she condemned her self

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‘ self upon the Spot, and was never
‘ guilty more. Thus, adds St. *Au-*
‘ *gustine*, while our Friends help to
‘ corrupt and destroy us, by flatter-
‘ ing us, the Reproaches of our Ene-
‘ mies serve sometimes to reclaim us.
Pass by therefore and take no notice
of the Malice and Injustice of those
that speak Ill of you. Examine be-
twixt God and your Conscience, if
what is said of you be true; and if
it is, the best Use you can make of
their ill Intention, is, to correct and
amend your self.

THE

T H E

Spiritual Director.

The Second Part.

Wherein are Explained the Duties of the Principal States and Conditions that are in the World.

C H A P. I.

Of the Sins which the Rich ordinarily fall into.

AS it may be supposed an easy matter, for the Rich to find both Directors and good Books enough, to instruct themselves in all their Duties; so, without enlarging much in this place, I shall only tell them, that theirs is a State which
Christ

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Christ hath laid his Curse upon, saying, *Woe to you Rich, because you have your Consolation in this World: woe to you that are filled, because you shall be hungry: woe to you who now do laugh, because you shall mourn and weep,* Luke 6. 24. I shall tell them by the Authority of Scripture, that Pride, Impiety, Effeminacy, Epicurism, Injustice, and a Train of other Sins, for the most part attend great Riches, that they cause a Forgetfulness of God, that they render Man abominable in his Eyes by the ill Use he makes of them, and that 'tis very hard for a rich Man to be saved. Yes, says our Saviour, *it is very hard for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a Camel to pass through the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. And upon the Disciples wondering at this, and saying, Who then shall be saved? Jesus beholding them, said, With Men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible,* Mat. 19. 23. Now, if you ask me how comes this Difficulty to be so great, I shall answer you,

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you, there is in Riches (and so the like in Honours and Pleasures) a secret Poison, so much the more subtil and strong, as it is the more sweet and agreeable to Self-love. It is morally impossible to escape the Infection; and the Saints could find no better Expedient, than absolutely to quit them all: for, as St. *Augustine* says admirably well, it is much easier to be without these false Goods, than to use them with Sobriety and Temperance.

It is the very Property of Riches, to extinguish Faith, Hope, Charity, Humility, Meekness, and the Spirit of Penitance. *Faith*, says St. Paul, *is the Substance of things to be hoped for, the Argument of things not appearing*, Heb. 11. 1. And this is what the Rich are seldom concerned about, they content themselves with the things present, and for what is told them of another Life, they even seem to doubt; so that many more Libertines and Reprobates are to be found among the Rich, than amongst the Poor. Hope obliges a Christian to expect all from God, and to look upon

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upon himself as a desolate, forlorn Creature, whose Trust is only in God, 1 Tim. 5. 5. On the contrary, The Rich, says the Wise Man, looks upon his Riches as a City to fortify him, and as a strong Wall to surround him, Prov. 10. 15. He knows that with Riches he cannot fail of a great many Friends, that there is no Danger so great which he may not escape, nor Dignity so high, to which he may not be advanced by the Force of Money. The Rich are sensible, from the great Numbers that depend on them, how much they have it in their Power, either to ruine or oblige; and this serves only to puff them up, and make them more in love with Riches, whence they derive so much Authority and Respect. As for Charity, we cannot say they have much to spare, either for God or their Neighbour. Some are eager in the Pursuit of their Pleasures, others delight in making a splendid Appearance, others in counting and piling up their Bags. They know not what Compassion means. As they have no share in other Mens Sufferings, Psal. 72. 5.

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So neither have they Pity : they are
so full of themselves, that they never
think of others : and our Saviour
drew more than one Man's Picture
when he spoke of *Dives*. *This rich
Man was clothed with Purple and Silk,
and fared magnificently every day. There
lay at his Gate a poor Beggar called La-
zarus, full of Sores, desiring to be filled
of the Crums that fell from the rich
Man's Table, but no body relieved him,
and all the Comfort he received, was
from the Dogs that came to lick his
Sores, Luke 16. 19.* Behold here, I
say, the true Picture of the greatest
number of the Rich, and the ordina-
ry Effects of Riches; Luxury, Pomp,
Pride, costly Apparel, lofty Houses,
rich Furniture, a World of Superflu-
ities, a great number of Servants full
as wicked as their Masters, luxurious
Tables, Prodigality to the last degree,
when it concerns the making a Fi-
gure in the World, and nothing for
the Poor but Bowels of Iron, a
Hardness so great, that they cannot
endure them ; they can let them
Die with Hunger and Cold, while
their Wardrobes are over-stockt with
Cloths,

Cloths, and their Horses and Dogs well fed for their Pleasure. Judge after this, whether Jesus Christ might not well Curse the State of the Rich, and if it was not most just that he who neglected poor *Lazarus*, should himself, after Death, be buried in Hell. It is so difficult a thing to make a good Use of Riches, that the Wise Man questioned whether a rich Man were to be found that did not place his Affection and Hope in his Wealth. *Shew me one*, says he, *that I may set forth his Praise; for whoever he be, he is a wonderful Man, and hath done great things in his Life*, Eccl. 31. 9. It is good sometimes to set before our Eyes these terrible Truths, to prevent our being enchanted and drawn away with the *Deceitfulness of Riches*; for so our Saviour expresses it: *There are some*, says he, *who hear the Word of God, and are signified by that part of the Seed which fell amongst Thorns, because the Cares of the World and the Deceitfulness of Riches, taking Possession of the Heart, choke up the Word, and it becomes fruitless*, Mat. 13. 22.

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C H A P. II.

Wherein are seen the Duties of the Rich, who are desirous to be Saved.

ALtho' the Salvation of the Rich be a very difficult Task, yet it is not impossible with God. Our Lord hath neither commanded them to quit their Riches, nor hath he excluded them his Kingdom, provided they live according to the Rules of his Gospel. All that we have been saying concerns only those who heap up Treasures to themselves, *and are not rich in God, Luke 12. 21.* The Rich then have their Duties, and provided they comply with them, they shall be saved. The chief of them are set down by St. Paul, where he says, *Command the Rich of this World not to be high-minded, not to trust in the Uncertainty of Riches, but in the Living God, who gives us all things abundantly to enjoy, to become rich in good Works, to give liberally,*

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to lay up to themselves a good Foundation for the time to come, that they may arrive at the true Life, 1 Tim. 6. 17. Here you see are three or four Duties of great Importance.

The first is, not to value our selves upon our Riches, and not to put our Confidence in them, because they are incapable of rendering us truly happy. ‘You

Letter to Proba. ‘must, says St. *Augustine* ‘to a very rich Lady, in

‘order to love and desire the true Life,
‘look upon your self as abandoned
‘and without Comfort in this, how
‘happy soever you may seem to be
‘in it: for as there is no true Life
‘but that in Comparison of which,
‘this that we prize so much deserves
‘not even the Name of Life, how
‘sweet and agreeable soever it may
‘be; so neither is there any true
‘Comfort but that which God promised by the Prophet, when he
‘said, *I will give him true Consolation and Peace, which is above all Peace.*
‘Without that, all the Comforts of
‘this Life are Afflictions and Punishments rather than Comforts: for
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‘ what Comfort is there to be found
 ‘ in Riches and Dignities, wherein
 ‘ such as have not experienced this
 ‘ true Felicity are apt to place their
 ‘ Happiness, since it is incompara-
 ‘ bly better to be without them than
 ‘ with them, and that the Fear of
 ‘ losing them proves a greater Tor-
 ‘ ment than the Desire of possessing
 ‘ them ?

The second Rule which the Apo-
 stle prescribes to the Rich, is, to put
 their Trust in God, and this we shall
 explain in the last Chapter of this
 Book, where we shall speak of the
 perpetual Desire we ought to have of
 Beatitude.

The third, is, to become rich in
 good Works, that is to say, to give
 plentiful Alms : for the good Use of
 Riches consists in not employing
 them ill, and in doing with them
 all the Good we can. Upon which
 it will not be amiss to observe, 1.
 That this is a Precept, and not a
 Counsel ; *Command*, says St. Paul,
 and Christ had commanded it before
 him ; *Give Alms of that which remains*,
 Luke 11. 4. *Give to every one that*
asketh

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asketh thee : give and there shall be given to you. Be good and merciful, ch. 6. 30. This Command is frequently found in the *Old Testament* as well as the *New*. The Holy Ghost has again and again recommended it to the Rich, to have Compassion on the Poor, and never to turn away their Face and Hand from those who ask an Alms. St. John says, *He that hath the Substance of the World, and seeing his Brother in need, shall shut his Bowels from him, how doth the Charity of God abide in him ?* 1 John 3. 17. 2. That this Precept is of so strickt an Obligation, that he who refuses to give Alms, sinneth not only against Charity, but against Justice too, because God being the Sovereign Master of all Earthly Goods, we have no Right to them but what he is pleased to give us. We should have had nothing, had he thought fit to reserve all to himself ; and if we have something, it is from his Bounty that we hold it. Now, he hath given us Riches upon three Conditions. *First*, That we shall not love them, nor place our Happiness

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in them. *Secondly*, That we shall use them as if we used them not, and possess them as if we possessed them not. *Thirdly*, That we shall content our selves to take of them for Food and Rayment; that is to say, what is necessary for us, according to the Rules of Christian Temperance, and that we shall give all the rest to the Poor. This is precisely what is meant by that Command of Jesus Christ, *Give that which remains to you in Alms.* And St. Paul would have us labour to become rich in good Works, to give cheerfully, and to lay up a Treasure in Heaven. All which cannot be done but by giving in abundance.

C H A P. III.

That according to the Fathers, we are obliged to give what is superfluous to the Poor.

THE Holy Fathers have, from these Authorities, concluded that a rich

rich Man, who reserves all for himself, and spares nothing for the Poor, is not only uncharitable and unmerciful, but an unjust Man, and a Robber, who keeps what belongs to another: for altho' he be, according to the Civil Law, so much Master of his Estate that he may dispose of it as he pleases, without being accountable to any one; yet in the Sight of God he is no longer lawfully possessed of it, than while he employs and makes use of it according to his Intentions and Will, who obliges him to give part of it to the Poor. Hear

St. *Augustine*, who carries
Ep. 153. ad this Principle yet farther:
Macedon. 'If we give Attention to

Prov. 17. 'what is written, *That*
 'the whole World belongs to the Faith-
 'ful, and that the Infidels have not any
 'thing, of which they are lawfully
 'possessed; are not they guilty of re-
 'taining what belongs to another,
 'who, without regard to the Right
 'Use of their Riches, enjoy themselves
 'with what they have acquired, and
 'place therein their Hearts Content?
 'For, all Goods whatever, that we
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‘ have no Right to possess, are the
‘ Goods of another; and we have no
‘ Right to possess any thing but what
‘ we possess justly, and we possess
‘ nothing justly but what we possess
‘ as we ought. Every thing then
‘ that we possess not as we ought, is
‘ the Goods of another, and not to
‘ possess them as we ought, is not to
‘ make a good Use of them. You
‘ see then how many would be bound
‘ to make Restitution, did they know
‘ to whom or where to make it.
‘ Now, is it making a right Use of
‘ our Substance, to lock it up through
‘ Avarice, or to squander it away in
‘ Luxury, and all the Extravagancies
‘ of the Age? The same Saint says
‘ elsewhere, We should have a great
‘ deal to spare, as superfluous, could
‘ we but confine our selves to what
‘ is necessary: but if we are for ha-
‘ ving things needless and unprofita-
‘ ble, all we have will not suffice.
‘ Seek not therefore more than what
‘ is sufficient for the Work of God,
‘ and remember that what is super-
‘ fluous to the Rich, is necessary for
‘ the Poor, and that to keep what is
O ‘ super-

' superfluous to you, is keeping what
 ' belongs to another. *St. Clement of*
 ' *Alexandria* says, It is a shameful
 ' and absurd thing to see a Man live
 ' in Plenty and Luxury, while a
 ' great many are starving for want
 ' of Bread. *St. Athanasius* says, The
 ' Apostle bids us give what's remain-
 ' ing, to relieve the Necessities of the
 ' Poor; that is to say, if we hide or
 ' lay up any thing in Reserve, after
 ' having taken what is necessary for
 ' Food and Rayment, we shall be
 ' accountable for it at the Day of
 ' Judgment, and shall there be lookt
 ' upon and treated as Homicides,
 ' because with that Money we might
 ' have delivered many of our Bre-
 ' thren from Death. *St. Cyprian* de-
 ' clares it is a Sin against God to be-
 ' lieve that he hath given you Wealth
 ' for any other End but to employ it
 ' profitably, and in order to your
 ' Salvation. Great Estates are cer-
 ' tainly great Temptations, and 'tis
 ' well if Riches, instead of redeeming
 ' Sins, serve not to encrease them.
 ' *St. Basil*, speaking to the Rich, says,
 ' Consider who you are, whose are
 ' the

‘ the Goods you have the Admini-
‘ stration of, from whom you have
‘ received them, and by whose Fa-
‘ vour you are placed above other
‘ Men. You are the Ministers of a
‘ God sovereignly good ; you are the
‘ Dispensers of his Goods to those
‘ who are his Servants as well as you.
‘ Look then upon these Goods not
‘ as your own, but as belonging to
‘ another, and of which a most ex-
‘ act and rigorous Account will one
‘ Day be demanded of you. Can
‘ you imagine that God is unjust in
‘ making such an unequal Distribu-
‘ tion of what is so necessary for
‘ Life ? Why is one Man rich, and
‘ another poor ? God hath thought
‘ fit to order it so, to the end that
‘ the one might receive the Recom-
‘ pense of his Liberality and faithful
‘ Administration, and that the other
‘ might be Crowned at the Price of
‘ his Patience. Who do you call
‘ Covetous but him that is not con-
‘ tent with what ought to suffice
‘ him ? And who is guilty of Fraud
‘ but he that applieth to his own Use
‘ what of Right belongs to another ?

' Are not you then guilty both of
 ' Avarice and Fraud, when you ap-
 ' propriate to your selves what was
 ' given you only to be distributed to
 ' others? If he may be called a
 ' Robber that strips a Man; you who
 ' refuse to cloath the Naked when
 ' you may, what Name do you de-
 ' serve? The Bread which you lock
 ' up belongs to him that is hungry;
 ' the Cloaths you have by you are
 ' his that hath none; the Shoes you
 ' keep moulding in your Wardrobe
 ' belong to those that go barefoot,
 ' and the Money that you have hid
 ' under Ground is their due who are
 ' in want of every thing. I have
 ' seen a great many, adds St. *Basil*,
 ' who have fasted, and prayed, and
 ' sighd for their Sins, and have
 ' shewn all the Marks of Christian
 ' Piety, but without costing them a-
 ' ny thing, or giving so much as one
 ' Farthing to the Poor. What Ser-
 ' vice can the Practice of all other
 ' Vertues do them, when it is cer-
 ' tain, that without Alms the rest
 ' can never open to us the Kingdom
 ' of Heaven. He says also, That the
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Rich are obliged even by the Command of God, to give their Superfluities to the Poor. *St. Gregory Nissen*: Moderate your Expences, imagine not that all you have is for your self; you ought to give some part of it to the Poor, and to the Friends of God. Make use of your Fortune; I pretend not to hinder you, use it; but take care you abuse it not. It is almost an equal Crime not to lend to a poor Man, and to lend him at Usury. *St. Ambrose*: We read in Scripture, *Put not off till to morrow him that asketh an Alms of thee.* Now, if God cannot endure that you shall say to a poor Man, I'll give you something to morrow, how will he suffer you to say, I'll give you nothing at all? It is not properly of your own what you give to the Poor, but rather of his; and the Goods that you usurp to your self, was given by God for the common Use and Benefit of Mankind. The Earth belongs to all, and not to the Rich only: therefore the Scripture bids you, *Lay open your Heart upon*
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‘ the Poor, and render to him what you
 ‘ owe him. You are fond of fine
 ‘ Cloaths and rich Moveables, while
 ‘ others want Bread. Consider, you
 ‘ that are Rich, what Judgment you
 ‘ will draw upon your selves. The
 ‘ Poor are ready to starve with Hun-
 ‘ ger, and your Granaries are shut
 ‘ against them. Unhappy that you
 ‘ are! you have it in your Power to
 ‘ save the Lives of so many misera-
 ‘ ble Wretches, and you have not
 ‘ the Will. One of your Diamonds
 ‘ alone were enough to nourish a
 ‘ whole Province. *St. Jerome* : If
 ‘ you have any thing over and above
 ‘ what is necessary for Food and
 ‘ Rayment, know that you ought to
 ‘ give it to the Poor.

I have purposely related all these
 Passages, to shew, that the Obligation
 of giving all that is superfluous to
 the Poor, is a Sentiment grounded
 upon the constant and uniform Do-
 ctrine of the Holy Fathers, and there-
 upon ought to be regarded as an un-
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C H A P. IV.

Some Rules concerning Alms, taken from the Doctrine of the Holy Fathers.

1. **I** Must tell you, that according to the same Authority, the having a great many Children is not a Reason for your diminishing, but rather for encreasing your Alms, because, say the Saints, the more Children you have, the more you have for whom you ought to Pray, and to procure Prayers. 2. That you ought not to put off your Alms till your Death; for if you only think of being Charitable at that time, it will profit you nothing at all, or but very little. 3. That Alms are wonderfully efficacious for the cancelling and redeeming Sins that are sincerely repented of: That they may serve for the Rich in lieu of Pennances and Austerities, which they are not capable of performing; but are of no Benefit at all to those who conti-

nue to live in Sin, for they must not pretend to purchase a Liberty to offend God; it would look as if they designed it a kind of Bribery, to give him part of their Estate not to be punished for the Crimes they daily commit, and which they intend not to mend. 4. That it is more Meritorious to employ your Charity for the Relief of the Poor, than for the Ornament of Churches: to do both is very good; but when that cannot be, it is better to succour the living Members of Jesus Christ, than to adorn his material Temples. 5. That there are sometimes Miseries so extremely pressing, that the Rich are obliged to afford their extraordinary Assistance, by giving not only what is superfluous, but by lessening and retrenching the Number of their Servants, their Equipage, their Furniture, and especially in what serves only for State and Shew; and by reducing themselves as near as they can, to true Christian Simplicity. 6. That we must render to God an exact Account of all our unprofitable Expences, how inconsiderable soever they

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they be, because we are not properly Masters of our Estates, but Stewards. 7. That in dispensing our Alms, we ought to prefer Spiritual Goods to Corporal, for Example, a Foundation for Instructions and Catechisms, for Priests, Vicars and School-masters, to that for a Distribution of Bread and Meat. 8. To prefer poor Ecclesiasticks before others, and not to stay till they ask us, but to prevent their Necessities, and to assist them privately and liberally. 9. To prefer our poor Relations before Strangers, in giving them wherewith to relieve their Necessities, but not to pamper and enrich themselves. 10. To prefer the Good Poor before the Wicked, yet without searching too nicely into this Point, because it is better that a wicked poor Body should find Relief, than to be wanting in assisting a good one. 11. To prefer the Sick before those that have their Health, those that are willing to Work before those that are Lazy and will take no Pains, the shame-faced Poor before common Beggars. 12. Not to publish our Alms, to give

in Secret, with Humility, with Meekness, with Compassion, with Respect, looking upon Jesus Christ in the Person of the Poor, since he hath said, *What Good soever you have done to one of these my least Brethren, you have done it to me*, Mat. 25. 40. and with Joy, because God loves not him that gives with Sadness, and as it were by Force, but him that gives cheerfully.

13. According to your Ability, since he that soweth sparingly, sparingly shall reap, and he that soweth in Blessings, of Blessings also shall reap; 2 Cor. 9. 6.

14. To put Jesus Christ in our Will, as one of our Children, by bequeathing so much to the Poor as a Child's part comes to. This indeed is not delivered by the Fathers as a Precept, but as an excellent Counsel only.

15. To endeavour to procure the Spiritual Good of the Poor, to instruct them, to comfort them, to give them good Advice and good Example, and to remember that every good thing we do to our Neighbour for the Love of God, is a real Alms. This made the Saints affirm, that Brotherly Correction, forgiving Injuries, Chastising

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Chastising those that are under our Charge, are Alms more agreeable to God than Gold and Silver. 16. Lastly, We are taught by the Saints, that no Body is exempt from the Obligation of giving Alms, for God requires no more of us than we are able to do; and the Widow, for putting her two Mites into the Box, was preferred by our Saviour to all the rich Persons, who had put in a great deal more, *Luke 21. 3.* 'The Kingdom of God, says St. *Augustine*, is equally to be purchased both by the rich Man, who gives all his Treasures for it, and by the poor Man, who only gives a Cup of cold Water. How much do you think will this Heavenly Inheritance cost, which may be bought unseen? Only so much as he can give who has a mind to buy it. Two Farthings, a Glass of cold Water, you'll say is very little, yet it will come still cheaper, since a good Will alone is sufficient when he hath nothing else. We have then all that's needful, when we have a good Will, that is to say, Charity.

Charity. He that hath Charity, hath always something to give : for he either gives of the Goods of this World, or he gives good Instructions, Comfort and Advice, which are much more valuable than Gold and Silver.

C H A P. V.

Of the Idea a Christian ought to have of Poverty.

BY what we have said of the Perils and Dangers incident to the State of the Rich, it may be presumed how much we have to say in favour of that of the Poor. A little Faith would suffice to make us reflect on this Expression of the Gospel ; *Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*, Mat. 5. 3. Poverty hath its Advantages which are not to be contested ; Jesus Christ hath preferred it to Riches as well by his own Example as Doctrine ; he was Born of poor Parents, in a Stable, and

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and that a hired one. It was to the Poor he first made known his Birth, and they were the first that came to adore him. He was afterwards adored by the Sages who were rich, but it was in Poverty they adored him, for he would not change his Condition to receive their Homages. He was presented in the Temple, where the Blessed Virgin gave in Sacrifice for him, according to the Law of our Lord, a pair of Turtles or two young Pidgeons. He felt all the Inconveniences of Poverty at *Bethlem*, in his Flight and during his Stay in *Egypt*, at *Nazareth*, and every where. He wrought till he was Thirty Years of Age at hard Labour with *St. Joseph*; he lived upon Alms the three or four Years of his Preaching, and was so very poor, that he had not whereon to lay his Head: he made Choice, for his Disciples of a Company of poor Fisher-men; and not only in his Life-time, but long after his Death, he called to the Faith *not many wise according to the Flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, 1 Cor. i. 26.* and so far were the Apostles from
pre-

preferring the Rich before the Poor, that we see they could not endure to have more Respect paid to themselves in the Church, than to the Poor. *My Brethren*, says St. James, *have not the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of Glory, in Acception of Persons* : for if there shall enter into your Assembly a Man, having a Gold Ring, in goodly Apparel ; and there shall enter in a poor Man, in homely Attire, and you have Respect to him that is clothed with the goodly Apparel, and shall say to him, Sit thou here well, but say to the poor Man, Stand thou there, or sit under my Foot-stool : do you not judge with your selves, and are become Judges of unjust Thoughts ? Hear, my dearest Brethren, Hath not God chosen the Poor in this World, Rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him ? But you have dishonoured the poor Man, Jam. 2. 1. But let the humble Brother, says the same Apostle, glory in his Exaltation, and the Rich in his Humiliation, because as the Flower of Grass, shall he pass, Jam. 1. 9. Behold here the first Advantage of Poverty.

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The second is, that it delivers the faithful Christian from a great many Temptations, Dangers and Sins, which are very incident to the Rich. A Man that is truly poor, is in no danger of being accountable for Superfluities, since he often wants even Necessaries. He hath no Money for Plays, Opera's, Entertainments and Rambles, since he is not always provided of Money for Bread and Cloths. Pride, Loftiness and State enter not his Habitation: he's not troubled with many Visits, nor doth he make any but what are necessary: he cannot spare a moment of Time for Play, because he hath little enough for his Livelihood: he oppresses no Body by Violence, but is himself very often a Sufferer on that Score: he's not apt to engage others in Law-suits, being rather willing to loose what's his due, than loose so much Time from his Work: he's not only out of the occasion of leading a soft, sensual and voluptuous Life, as most of the Rich do, but hath daily Opportunities of Practising Humility, Patience and Pennance. *All the days*

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of the Poor are evil, says Solomon, Prov. 15. 15. *The Indigence of the Poor keeps them in fear; they are threatned, they are despised, they are abused, they are oppressed, and are not able to resist,* Ib. 10. 15. *The poor Man speaketh with Supplications, but the rich answereth roughly,* Ib. 18. 23. *Many worship the Person of the Mighty, and are Friends of him that giveth Gifts: but the Brethren of the poor Man hate him; moreover, his Friends have also departed far from him,* Ib. 19. 4, 7. The poor Man's Bread is his Life, and if he can but find enough for him and his Family, he thinks himself very happy. The Scripture frequently sets forth the Injustices done to the Poor, the many hard Words they meet with, the Contempt the World hath for them, and all the Miseries they have to undergo. Their Bread is often besprinkled with their Tears; they lead a sorrowful, laborious, irksome Life, and their Hearts are almost continually plunged in Bitterness. Now, all this, if rightly made use of, proves an excellent Means for Salvation: it is the very State our Saviour chose for his

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his Disciples : *You shall weep and lament, says he, but the World shall rejoyce : you shall be made sorrowful, but your Sorrow shall be turned into Joy,* John 16. 20. A poor Man needs but to bear patiently the Mortifications inseparable from his State, to make him a Saint. It is he that literally performs the Pennance which God imposed on the first Man, in Punishment of his Sin, when he told him, *That he should eat his Bread with the Sweat of his Brow, that the Earth should produce nothing but Thorns, and be cursed for his sake,* Gen. 3. 17.

The third Advantage a poor Man hath, is, that Almighty God takes him into his particular Care ; *His Eyes look down upon him,* Psal. 10. His Providence watches over him. This lessens his Grief, it sweetens his Sorrows. it even loads him with interior Comforts, which are more valuable than all the Treasures of the Rich. God blesses the Labour, multiplies, by continual Miracles, the Bread, the Money, the Goods, and other small Stock of the Poor : I mean of the good Poor, who find a
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thousand times more Joy in the little they have, than the Rich in all their abundance. 'Tis true, they have no store of Money or Gold, but their Wealth lies in Vertue: their Coffers are empty, but their Hearts are full of Faith, Hope and Love. Innocence is what they possess, which is above all Treasures: nay, they possess even God himself, and what would you have more? 'That Man is very covetous, says St. *Augustine*, whom God doth not suffice. The good Will of the Poor, is a Treasure, which no Violence can take from them, and in which they find a most sweet Repose, and real Assurance. God fails not to enrich the Hearts of those who are truly poor, with his Holy Spirit, and to fill their Souls with the Treasures of his Grace, when he finds them void of all Affection to Earthly Goods. Jesus Christ became poor himself, to fill the Poor. Open then the Bosom of your Faith, and receive into it your poor Lord, and you shall be no longer poor. Jesus Christ Poor, says St. *Paulinus*, is the

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‘ the Shame of the Rich, and Glory
‘ of the Poor. True Christians, says
‘ another Father, do boast of their
‘ Poverty. And in Reality, is it not
more glorious to despise Riches than
to possess them? can he be esteemed
poor who wants nothing, who envies
no Body, and who in the Sight of
God is truly rich? If Riches were
either necessary or profitable to true
Christians, they certainly would ask
them of God, and should obtain
them, because to him belong all
things; but they love Innocence and
Holiness better than all Earthly
Goods.

C H A P. VI.

Of the Obligations of the Poor.

A I L that hath been said of the
Advantages of Poverty, suppo-
ses a Man poor as well in Heart and
Affection, as in Effect. Our Lord
hath blessed none but the true Poor,
that is to say, such as love Poverty,
or

or at least bear it patiently. So that the first Duty of a poor Man, is, to be truly poor. What Merit shall you have, says St. *Augustine*, if wanting an Estate, you burn with a Desire of having one? A Man that hath great Riches, and is not puffed up with them, is truly poor; and another that hath nothing and covets much, and is proud, God will place him in the Rank of the Rich and the proud. A covetous poor Man is condemned as rich, altho' he be not worth a Farthing. It is said to the Rich, *Give*, and to the Poor, *Covet not*.

'St. *Basil*, explaining these words, 'The poor Man hath cryed, says, How many are there who are not rich in the Goods of the Earth, and nevertheless are extremely covetous in the Disposition of their Hearts? such will never be saved by their Poverty, but condemned by their ill Will. You must not therefore call every one happy who is in want, but only such as prefer the Precepts of Jesus Christ before all the Treasures of the World. But let the Authority

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ity of St. Paul suffice to teach us what a true poor Man is: *Piety*, says he, *with Sufficiency, is great Riches*? For we brought nothing into this World; doubtless neither can we carry away any thing. But having Food and wherewith to be covered; with these we are content. For they that will be made rich, fall into Temptation, and the Snare of the Devil, and many Desires unprofitable and hurtful, which plunge Men into Destruction and Perdition, for the Root of all Evils is Covetousness, which certain desiring, have fallen from the Faith, and have entangled themselves in many Sorrows, 1. Tim. 6. Thus we see the very Love of Riches takes away from a Man all the Merit of his Poverty. And were he poor as *Job*, if he set his Heart upon Gold and Silver, he would be condemned like *Dives*, because there is nothing so detestable in the Eyes of God as Avarice. And St. Paul therefore calls the covetous Man an Idolater. Let us then say, with *Solomon*, which is but the lowest Degree of Christian Vertue, Give me neither Poverty nor Riches: give only things necessary for my Sustainance;

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nance; least perhaps, being filled, I may be tempted to deny thee, and may say, who is the Lord? or being compelled by Poverty, I may Steal, and forswear the Name of my God, Pro. 30. 8.

The second Duty of the Poor, is, not to murmur against God, but to suffer with Patience to be deprived of the Conveniences and Comforts of Life. The Way to Heaven is very rugged, narrow, and hard; but the Recompence of Poverty is infinite. We suffer here for a little time, to be for ever at rest. We shall share in the Joy of our Divine Master, provided we take part with him in his Sufferings. We shall endure a little Hunger here to be filled hereafter at the Table of Angels. *You are they,* will Christ say to us, *that have remained with me in my Temptations: and I dispose to you, as my Father disposed to me a Kingdom, that you may eat and drink upon my Table in my Kingdom.* Luke 22. 28. We shall be despised in this World by the Wicked rich ones, they shall treat us ill, they shall shut their Doors against us; but we shall have our turn. A Day will

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will come when we shall be entrusted with the Gates of the Kingdom of Heaven, and then they shall be repulsed by us; sooner or later they will Dye, and Hell shall be their Sepulcher: they shall cast up their Eyes out of the midst of Flames; they shall see *Abraham* with all the good Poor in his Bosom, and shall say to him, *Father Abraham have mercy on us, send some one of those blessed Poor that he may dip the tip of his Finger into Water to cool our Tongues, because we are extreemly tormented in this Flame,* Luke 16. 23. But this sad Comfort will be refused them, and they shall be told; *Remember that you have received good things in your Life-times, and these poor Creatures evil; but now they are comforted, and you are tormented.*

The poor Man's third Duty, is, to put his whole Confidence in God, who hath told him; *I will not leave thee, neither will I forsake thee,* Heb. 13. 5. *Be not solicitous, says our Saviour, for your Life what you shall eat, neither for your Body what Rayment you shall put on. Behold the Fowls of the Air, that they*

they Sow not, neither Reap, nor gather in-
to Barns; and your Heavenly Father
feedeth them. Are not you more of Price
than they? Be not careful therefore, like
the Heathen, for your Father knoweth
that you need all these things. But seek
first the Kingdom of God, and the Justice
of him, and all these things shall be
given you besides. Be not therefore care-
ful for to morrow; for to morrow shall
be careful for it self, Sufficient for the
Day, is the Evil thereof, Math. 6. 25.
Cast then thy Care upon our Lord, he will
not give the just Man to be tossed for e-
ver, Ps. 54. v. 25. Contend not with
the Wicked, neither envy them that work
Iniquity; because they shall quickly wi-
ther as Grass, and as handfuls of Hay,
shall speedily be cut down. Hope in our
Lord, and do good; dwell upon the Earth,
and feed on his Riches: Delight in our
Lord, and he will give thee the Desires
of thy Heart. Put thy Concerns into his
Hands, hope in him, and he will act
for thee, Ps. 36. 1.

The poor Man's last Duty, is, to
labour continually to get his Living:
for we must not think that God obli-
ges himself to maintain idle Drones.

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He hath only promised to bless our Endeavours, and to take care of us when we are not in a Condition to Work : but the Order he hath established, both in Grace and Nature, is, that Man shall Labour, as if all depended on him, and shall Pray without ceasing, because all things depend on God ; that he must expect all from his Holy Hand, and banish from his Work all Fear, Solitude, and Disquiet, upon the Assurance that our Lord will never fail to help him, provided he does his Duty, which is, to put his Hand to the Plough. The Holy Ghost therefore, who hath told us by the Royal Prophet ; that, *Unless our Lord build the House, he labours in vain that builds it*, Ps. 126. 1. hath sayd by the Mouth of Solomon ; *Go to the Emmet, O Sluggard, and consider her ways, and learn Wisdom ; who whereas she hath no Guide, nor Master, nor Captain, prepareth Meat for her self in the Summer, and gathereth in the Harvest to eat. How long wilt thou Sleep, O Sluggard ? when wilt thou rise out of thy Sleep ? Thou shalt Sleep a little, a*

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little shalt thou Slumber ; a little shalt thou joyn thy Hands to Sleep, and penury shall come upon thee as a way-faring-Man, and Poverty as a Man armed. But if thou be not Sluggish, thy Harvest shall come as a Fountain , and Penury shall flee far from thee , Prov. 6. 6.

Working is so indispensable a Duty for the Poor, that it ought to take place of all others. In this their whole Devotion ought to consist. They Fast , they Pray , they hear Mass, they say the Office while they are at Work. They ought to spend Six Days of the Week in getting an honest Livelihood, and to employ the Sunday in the Service of God. Let them be careful not to profane, by Debauchery, these Holy Days. Drunkenness, Impurity, and wanton Dances, are directly contrary to the Sanctity that is required of us ; and there is less Sin, *St. Augustine* says, in labouring at the Plough on a Sunday or Holiday, than to pass them in Drinking and Dancing. A poor Man that will not Work to maintain his Family, is in a State of Sin, and must of necessity betake himself to the

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the High-way, or such like Courses: and if it is a Woman, she must expose her self to the Danger of loosing both Body and Soul, to keep her from Starving.

C H A P. VII.

What Idea a Christian ought to have of Grandeur.

WHAT we have said concerning the State of the Rich, may very well be applied to that of the Great Ones. It is extreamly full of Dangers and Obstacles to Salvation: it exposes Men to the most enormous Crimes; Injustice, Violence, Tyranny, Oppression, Pride, Contempt of God, Love of Praise, and a thousand other Sins surround the Great, and nothing less than Miracles are needful to preserve them.

The Scripture likewise is full of Threats and terrible Sentences against them. *Woe to you when all Men honour and bless you, Luke 6. 26. because*

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that which is high to Men, is Abomination before God, Luke 16. 15. Woe to them that make wicked Laws, Isa. 10. 1. Woe to the Assembly of the Proud, Isa. 28. 1. Woe to thee that spoilest thy Neighbour, shalt not thou also be spoiled? Isa. 33. 1. Woe to the Pastors of Israel, who fed themselves; are not the Flocks fed of the Pastors? you did eat the Milk, and were covered with the Wooll; and that which was fat you killed, but my Flock you fed not; that which was weak you strengthened not, and that which was sick you healed not, and that which was lost you sought not; and with Austerity you ruled over them, and with Might; but I can easily destroy the Pride of the Great, Ezek. 34. 2. Hear therefore, ye Kings, and understand; learn, ye Judges, of the ends of the Earth; give Ear, ye that rule Multitudes, and that please your selves in multitudes of Nations; because the Power is given you of our Lord, and Strength by the highest, who will examine your Works, and search your Thoughts; because when you were the Ministers of his Kingdom, you judged not rightly, nor kept the Law of Justice,

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nor have walked according to the Will of God. Horribly and quickly will he appear to you ; because most severe Judgment shall be done on them that bear Rule. To the little one Mercy is granted, but the Mighty shall mightily suffer Torments : for God will not except any Man's Person, neither will fear the Greatness of any Man ; because he made the Little and the Great, and he hath equally Care of all : but to the Stronger more strong Torment is threatened. To you therefore, O Kings, are these my Words, that you may learn Wisdom, and not fall, Wisd. 6. 1.

These are the Idea's the Word of God gives us of the State of the Great Ones, which Pride and Concupiscence have set so high a Value on, and so earnestly pursue. If we judge of Grandeur by the Light of Faith, it will frighten us, we shall avoid it as a high and slippery place, beset on all sides with Precipices. The Spirit of Christianity wholly tends to the humbling our selves, not to seek great Employments, but to suit our selves to lowly things, to look upon Dignities and high Stations as lofty Cedars,

Cedars, which, the taller they are, the more they are exposed to the Violence of Storms and Tempests. But in fine, since there must be Magistrates and Men of Power in the World, let them see here the Instructions proper for their State.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the Obligations of the Great Ones.

THEY ought to know, that the Difference of Conditions, as well as the unequal Distribution of Riches, was never the Creator's first Design, but an Effect and Consequence of *Adam's Sin*. Had Men remained in the State of Innocence, they had had no Kings nor Magistrates among them. They had been Born all equal, and in that Equality would have lived. 'Man, says 'St. Gregory, was not made properly to command Men, because such 'Power was established only to dis-

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cover to inferiour People the Will
of God, and to cause it to be obey-
ed, and this had not been necessa-
ry in the State of Innocence, where
all Men would have known it by
their own Lights, and faithfully
accomplished it by their own In-
clinations. So that Grandeur we
see is no more than an Effect of the
Disorder of Nature, and an Off-
spring of Sin. And there is nothing,
in my Opinion, more capable of
humbling the Great Ones than this
very Thought.

2. They ought always to bear in
Mind, that 'tis God who has raised
them to what they are; that it is
from him they hold all their Power.
By me Kings Reign, says the Scripture,
and Rulers decree Justice, Prov. 8. 15.
The Prince is the Minister of God, says
St. Paul, *to execute his Orders*, Rom.
13. 4. There is no King then but
who owes both Faith and Homage
to God, and is as strictly obliged to
pay true Allegiance to him, as any
Subjects are to their Prince. Hence
it follows, he ought to employ his
Power for no other End than the

Glory of God, to support Justice, to defend Truth, and to establish Piety. He cannot, without the blackest Ingratitude, and most Criminal piece of Pride, Glory in his Elevation, make it serve his own Ends and Designs, and Sacrifice to his Ambition the Power which was only given him to establish the Empire of Jesus Christ. Princes ought not to make their Will the Principle of their Actions, and much less to serve for a Rule to their People; Justice ought to shine in all their Projects, and nothing else can make their Reign either glorious or profitable: none but God can propose his Will for a Rule, because all that he wills is good, just and holy; while the Will of Man is oftentimes corrupted and depraved. This ought to oblige Kings, Princes, and all great Persons, to examine well the things they are about to undertake, or which are proposed by those that are about them, to the end they may reject the Ill, and embrace the Good. And as it is almost impossible, being encompassed with Flatterers and People

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ple who seek much more their own Interests than their Master's or the Glory of God, but they must be sometimes deceived, and engaged in several unjust and criminal Undertakings; so they ought not, under a false Pretence of Honour, to maintain what they have begun, even after God has discovered to them the Injustice, but to remember that they can do nothing against Truth and Justice, that the only Design of God, who placed them in Authority and Power, was to constitute them Ministers and Executors of his Will, by giving them a Right and Power, not to make themselves obeyed, but to see that God be obeyed, not to reign themselves, but to make God reign, not to make Men serve for their Glory and Grandeur, but to employ their Power for the Service of Men, and to procure them all the Temporal and Spiritual Blessings they are able

3. Another Duty belonging to Great Persons, is, to regard *Grandeur*, as a pure Ministry, having for its End the Honour of God, and the Advan-

tage of Men. They have it not for themselves but for others. And thence it is plain, that to use it according to God's Order and Appointment, they ought to be so far from considering People as their Slaves born to serve them, and depend on all their Humours and Caprices, that they should look upon themselves as belonging to the People, bound to serve them, to protect them, and to endeavour to make them easy and happy. All their Commands ought to be so just, that they may be able to answer, if God should require it of them, that they had no other Motive than his Glory and the Peoples Felicity. To make any other Use of Power and Grandeur, is no less than a kind of Rebellion against God.

4. A fourth Duty, is, to condemn the Praises of Men, and severely to chastise base Flatterers, who make it their Business to intoxicate them with the Esteem of themselves, and would gladly persuade them they are something more than Men. Such Flatteries are a Sweet, but dangerous, plague; and there's scarce a Prince, Magistrate,

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Magistrate, Superior, or Master of a Family, but swallows down this Poison with Pleasure, and finds in it his Destruction. Great Persons ought to keep themselves truly and sincerely humble amidst all the Honours that are payd them, and never suffer themselves to be Transported with them, because Glory belongs essentially to God, and it is forbid them to desire more than he is pleased to communicate. Whoever assumes more, is a proud Usurper, and sooner or later will be humbled.

5. The last Duty of Great Persons, is, to consider their Power as the Measure of their Obligations. As it all proceeds from God, they are bound to employ it all for God. They have no more to do but examine their Ability : for 'tis certain they ought to do all they can ; if they can do little, little will be required of them ; if much, their Obligations encrease in proportion to their Power. To hinder what's evil, to promote and establish good ; to employ for this purpose their Authority, their Riches, their Care, their Time, and even their

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their Lives too, when Necessity requires, is the essential Duty of Great Ones. The Rule is prescribed in three Words, altho' the Practice be of a large Extent, since they need but to make use of their Power, to procure a strict Observance of the Laws of God and his Church. I shall conclude this Chapter with those excellent Words of St. *Augustine*, which so well declare the Duties of the Great Ones.

' We call Kings happy when they
' reign with Justice.

' When in the midst of the Sovereign Honours that are paid them,
' and low Submissions of their People, they still remember they are
' but Men no more than others :

' When they employ their Power
' chiefly to establish and spread the
' Worship and Empire of the true
' God :

' When they fear him, love him,
' and serve him :

' When they prefer before the
' Possession of their own Kingdom,
' that other eternal Kingdom where
' all

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‘ all the Saints shall reign in Glory
‘ with them :

‘ When they are slow to punish,
‘ and easy to pardon : when they
‘ punish only for the Good and Wel-
‘ fare of their State, and not to satisf-
‘ fy their own Revenge :

‘ When they pardon in hope of A-
‘ mendment, and not with Design
‘ of letting Vice go unpunished :

‘ When they moderate their some-
‘ times indispensable Severity, by
‘ Acts of Meekness and Clemency,
‘ and by a liberal Profusion of Bene-
‘ fits :

‘ When they are so much the more
‘ reserved and moderate in their
‘ Pleasures, as they may take them
‘ with the greater Liberty :

‘ When they love rather to com-
‘ mand their Passions, than a great
‘ number of People :

‘ When they act in every thing
‘ purely for the sake of eternal Hap-
‘ piness, and not for Vain-Glory :

‘ When they are careful to offer
‘ frequently to God for their Sins the
‘ Sacrifice of Humility, Mercy and
‘ Prayer : These are the Princes we
‘ call

‘ call happy ; happy in the Hopes of
 ‘ being one Day truly so, when that
 ‘ which they expect shall come to
 ‘ pass.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Obligations of Subjects.

LET every Soul, says St. Paul, be
 subject to higher Powers, for there
 is no Power but of God. The Powers
 that be, are ordained of God. Whoso-
 ever therefore resisteth the Power, resisteth
 the Ordinance of God ; and they that
 resist, shall receive to themselves Dam-
 nation. For Rulers are not a Terror to
 good Works, but to the evil. Wilt thou
 then not be afraid of the Power ? Do
 that which is good, and thou shalt have
 Praise of the same : for he is the Mi-
 nister of God to thee for good. But if
 thou do that which is evil, be afraid ;
 for he beareth not the Sword in vain ;
 for he is the Minister of God, a Reven-
 ger to execute Wrath upon him that doth
 evil. Wherefore ye must needs be sub-
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ject, not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience sake. For this Cause pay your Tribute also; for they are God's Ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues, Tribute to whom Tribute is due, Custom to whom Custom, Fear to whom Fear, Honour to whom Honour. Owe nothing to any Man, but that you love one another, Rom. 13. 1. &c.

The Apostle has here set down, in a most expressive manner, the Submission and Fidelity due from Subjects to their Princes, and all Christians are here taught, that all the Powers which are in the World being established by God, no Man upon Earth can dispense us from our Obedience to them, so long as they command us nothing directly contrary to the Law of God. He therefore that resists on any Pretence whatsoever, doth plainly resist God himself, wounds his own Conscience, and perhaps may be punished by the Prince's Sword, as the Minister of God. We ought all to learn of St. Paul the strict Obligation we are under, of being utter Enemies to all Cabals,

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Cabals, Revolts, Seditions, and all manner of Resistance against our lawful Princes. It was by this humble Submission that the Church has always triumphed over her greatest Persecutors, and brought them to be her Defenders. It is not to be expressed what Violences, Injustices, and Cruelties the Christians suffered during the first Three Hundred Years, without ever resisting, without disturbing the publick Peace, or entering into any Conspiracies. They neither wanted Force, nor Courage, nor Money, nor Pretences, nor Occasions : but these Words of *St. Paul*, *He that resisteth Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God*, stopt them short ; and it was an inviolable Maxim amongst them, *That a Christian ought to suffer any Death rather than defend himself by Force.*

Besides the Obedience, Honour, Tribute, and respectful Fear we owe to Kings, *St. Paul* will have us Pray for them both in publick and private. *I exhort therefore, that first of all, Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks, be made for all Men ;*
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rity ; that we may lead a quiet and
peaceable Life, in all Godliness and
Honesty ; for this is good and acceptable
in the Sight of God our Saviour, who
willeth that all Men may be saved, and
come to the Knowledge of the Truth,
1 Tim. 2. 1. Kings then, and all
who rule over us, have a Right to our
Prayers : the higher they are exalted,
the more difficult is their Salvation.
Casar and Christian are two things
rarely found united, and yet 'tis so
much the Church's Interest that
Princes be truly Christian, that we
cannot too much implore it of God.
We are elsewhere forbid by the Holy
Ghost to rail at higher Powers. *Speak
not ill of the King in thy Thoughts, and
slander not the Rich in the most private
part of thy Chamber, because the very
Birds of the Air will report thy Words,
and they that have Wings will publish
what thou hast said, Eccl. 10. 20.* And
besides, what Service can that do us,
unless it be to content the Malignity
of our Hearts, which is apt to find
the most Pleasure in Railing, when
we attack Persons of the highest
Rank ?

Rank? If at any time we discover Faults in our Rulers, let us conceal them, let us sigh in the Presence of God, let us always have Respect to the Sacred Authority that resides in them, and let us never suffer their Persons to be torn in pieces by defaming Satyrs and scandalous Libels, which can never do any good, but always a great deal of harm.

C H A P. X.

Of the Obligations of Masters.

A Master truly Christian ought first to look upon his Condition to be such, as hinders him from following the profound Example of Humility given us by Jesus Christ, when he came, not to be served, he that was King of Heaven and Earth, but to be the Servant of Men. 2. As a dangerous State, insomuch as he becomes accountable for the Actions of others, he who is already so much charged with his own Sins. 3. He ought

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ought to remember, that his Servants, in Quality of Christians, are his Brothers, that he has with them one common Master, whom we all call our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Servants are our Brothers, not only because they were framed of the same Clay, and came of the same Father, but because having been Redeemed like us with the Blood of Jesus Christ, they are become like us Children of God through Baptism, and are called to the same Eternal Inheritance. This must oblige us to treat them with Mildness. *And you Masters,* says St. Paul, *shew Kindness to your Servants, forbearing Threatning, knowing that your Master also is in Heaven; neither is there Respect of Persons with him,* Eph. 6. 9. There is nothing then farther from the Spirit of Christianity, and even of Humanity, than the Tyrannick Spirit of many Masters, who look upon their Attendants as Animals of another Species, Born for their Service, to humour them in all their Whims and Fancies, and for whom they are not bound to have any Regard at all.

4. You

4. You ought to have as few Servants as possible, as well to lessen your Expence, as the Obligations you bring upon your self. Besides, a Christian ought to do a great many things himself: he should not exact the Service of his People but when his Strength or Time fails him. He should accustom himself to Rise, to Dress, and go to Bed alone, and to make as little use of his Servants as he can. There are a great many People who think they do a good Work in keeping more than they need, pretending they thereby maintain so many Poor; but I doubt it may rather be said they maintain so many idle Persons, and take them off from Husbandry and other profitable Employments. If you are inclined to provide for the Poor, begin with the Sick, the Lame, and such as are past their Labour: help and support poor Tradesmen who are ready to Break for want of a small Stock, and so many poor Creatures as there are that are ashamed to publish their Necessities to all the World. 5. Never take Servants that you are not able

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ble to maintain : and be afraid of incurring the Guilt of that terrible Sin of Defrauding Labourers of their Wages, one of the four which cry to Heaven for Vengeance : but if you are in a low Condition, be sure that you live accordingly. 6. Have always before your Eyes this Expressi-
on of St. Paul ; *If any Man have not care of his own, and especially of his Domesticks, he hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel,* 1 Tim. 5. 8. These Words have more need of being meditated than explained. A Master, a Father, a Superiour that takes no care of those under his Charge, has lost his Faith, and altho' he should live like a Saint in every thing else, the Apostle assures us he is worse than an Infidel. This Care nevertheless includes a great many things, and is a Task not so easily performed as you imagine. Your Servants are bound to obey you, 'tis true ; but you are to give an exact Account to God of whatever you shall command, forbid, or allow them, of all that they shall learn by your Discourses and Examples,
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of all the good and bad Occasions you shall put them into, and of your Negligence to instruct and correct them. Instruction, good Example, Correction, Employment, Subsistence and Wages, are what you owe them. *Bread, says the Holy Ghost, Correction and Labour, are for the Slave, Eccl. 33. 25.* You ought to feed your Servants according to your Condition, and the Service you put them to; let their Food be wholesome and sufficient, but not dainty and pampering, for that's the way to spoil them for ever returning to the Frugality of a Tradesman's Diet. *He that pampereth his Servant, says the Wise Man, shall find him a Rebel in the end, Prov. 29. 21.* See that the Fasts commanded by the Church be observed by all your Servants, except those whom too hard Labour or want of Years may excuse; and to make the Practice more easy to them, endeavour to Dine at a seasonable Hour. Inform your self a little if nothing be wanting at their Table. *The strong Woman, says Solomon, riseth before Day, to distribute Food to her Household:*

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Household : *She hath care that they be well cloathed, that they may not fear the cold of Winter, Prov. 31. 15.* Order it so that yours may go in decent Habit : let them not put all their Wages upon their Backs, nor affect to be *Beaus* ; for this leads them into many Inconveniences, and makes them good for nothing. As for their Work, it ought not to be too excessively hard ; regard must be had to the Strength of Servants, to manage them so as not to flave them off their Legs, and treat them worse than their Horses : for some Masters are so Inhuman, as to be more afraid of Working their Horses to Death than their Servants, because they have not these to Buy. The Law of God prescribes Humanity to be shewn even to Slaves. *If thy Brother be reduced through Poverty to sell himself unto thee, thou shalt not treat him as a Slave, but as a Hireling : oppress him not with thy Might, but fear thy God, Lev. 25. 39. 40.* Now, if a Slave ought to be thus treated who hath sold both his own and his Children's Liberty, how much more tender Usage ought

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a Servant to find, who is perhaps no ways inferiour to his Master, but in his Fortune?

Servants however ought to be set to Work, and a great Fault it is to suffer them to be idle. *Make thy Servant to Labour, and thou shalt find Quietness; loose his Hand, and he will seek Liberty: send him to Work, that he may not be idle; for Idleness teacheth much Malice,* Prov. 33. Set them then to Work, and if any among them won't take Pains, turn them off. One Servant of this lazy Temper is enough to spoil all the rest. Endeavour to have fixt times of Prayer in common for all your Family, and be present there your self, or else it will not be done as it ought. Engage your Servants to buy themselves some good Books, a good *Catechism*, a *Primer* or *Manual*, the *New Testament*, the *Following of Christ*: allow them time to hear Mass on Days of Obligation, and sometimes to go to a Sermon or Evensong. Exhort them to confess themselves at least six times in the Year, or oftner: provide them a good Confessor, that
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may direct them as to Communion. Reprove two or three times those that Swear, or Talk immodestly, or frequent Ale-houses; if after these Advertisements they amend not, away with them. Keep none in your Service that you find any ways given to Lewdness. Suffer no Debauchee in your House. Take care that decent Order and Behaviour be observed between the Men and Maids of your Family. Dispose their Lodgings so as that they may not go into each others Chambers without being seen by you or some other of the House. If any neglect to perform their *Easter* Duties after having been advertised, discharge them your Service, unless they present themselves to a prudent Confessor, and resolve to Communicate when he shall judge fit. Never do any thing before them that may give Scandal. Be easy to pardon Faults which only respect their Duty to you, especially when they happen but seldom, and proceed not from Malice nor too much Negligence. When they are Sick, visit them, comfort them, and turn them

not out of your House, unless Necessity obliges you. Give your Servants an honest Liberty of speaking to you. When you blame them, and they shew you that it is without Cause, give Ear to Reason, and carry not by Violence and high Hand what Justice does not give you. Testify your Love and Confidence to those that serve you well, and at the same time are faithful in the Service of God : but take care that Hypocrisy has no part in their Devotion. If you have an honest Servant that has lived long with you, you would do well to remember him in your Will ; for your Servants ought to be ranked in the first place amongst the Poor for whom you intend Legacies. There is a Justice in drawing those out of Misery who have given us the most considerable part of their time, and who perhaps have contracted such Infirmities in our Service as render them unable to get their Living.

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C H A P. XI.

How carefully Masters ought to avoid Hastiness and Anger.

Masters and Mistresses, who have any regard to Christian Piety, ought to consider that a Servant who chances not to please his Master in every thing, offends often but against a Man only; while he that falls into Anger and Passion, sins both against God and his Neighbour. A Sinner should not be too hasty to complain when he is ill served, since being himself, by his Sins, become a Slave to the Devil, he's not worthy to be served by the Children of God. He should say to himself, This Servant that I thus complain of, may, for ought I know, be one of God's Elect, and I a Reprobate, and may one Day Reign with Christ, and be happy, while I shall perish: far be it then from me to despise him, or use him ill. Let us remember how long God has suffered our Unfaithfulness,

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fulness, our sinful and loose Lives ; and why shall not we suffer small Faults from others ? God is not always offended at a Servant's Failings ; 'tis only Self-love and our own Humour have cause to complain, and Humility should teach us to bear such little Mortifications. We are not too apt to impose upon our selves all the Pennance we stand in need of ; let us not therefore loose the Merit of these daily Domestick Pennances, which may not be less acceptable with God than those we might have practised by our own Choice. Let us adore the Providence which permits this Servant to want either Wit, Breeding, or other Accomplishments. Let us not turn him off upon that account ; but reflect that God will treat us as we shall treat him, that harsh and severe Masters must expect to find nothing but Severity and Rigour with him, and that Meekness is recommended to us by Christ as one of the Characters which distinguish Christians from other Men. Let us consider that if this Servant had been
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without Fault, we had wanted the occasion of Exercising our Patience, Humility, Meekness, Charity, of carrying our Cross, of overcoming our Humour, and of encreasing our Merits. We expect he shall suffer all our Faults and Humours; let us resolve then to bear with some of his. Let us not believe our Piety sincere, if every trivial Occasion shall make us angry and impatient; for true and solid Piety consists in the Mastering of our Passions.

Hear what the Holy Ghost tells you; *Be angry and sin not, Psal. 4. A Fool presently sheweth Anger, but he that dissembleth Injuries, is wise. He that is soon provoked to Anger, also falleth more easily into Sin. He that is patient, sheweth his Wisdom; the angry Man sets forth his Folly, Prov. 12. 16. Better is the patient than a strong Man, and he that ruleth his Mind than an Overthrower of Cities, Prov. 16. 32. Be not quickly angry, because Anger resteth in the Bosom of the Fool, Eccl. 7. 10. Our Saviour tells you, that Whosoever is angry with his Brother, shall be in danger of Judgment, and if he give*
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him injurious Words, shall be guilty of Hell Fire, Mat. 5. 23. St. Paul reckons Anger among the Works of the Flesh which exclude us the Kingdom of God. Let not the Sun, says he, go down upon your Anger, Eph. 4. 26. The angry Man, says St. James, worketh not the Justice of God; that is to say, does no good at all to him that is reprov'd, but great harm to his own Soul. Blessed are the Meek, says Christ, for they shall possess the Land, Mat. 5. 4. Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of Heart, and you shall find Rest to your Souls, Ib. 11. 29. They who receive the Word of God in a good and upright Heart, do retain it, and yield Fruit in Patience, Luke 8. 15. In your Patience you shall possess your Souls, Ib. 21. 19. The Fruits of the Holy Ghost, says St. Paul, are Charity, Peace, Patience, Benignity, Goodness, Long-Sufferance, Meekness; and they that belong to Christ have Crucified their Flesh with its Vices and Concupiscences, Gal. 5. 22, 24. Bear ye one anothers Burthens, and so you shall fulfil the Law of Christ, Ib. 6. 2. If a Man be surprized in a Fault, you that are Spiritual

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ritual instruct such a one in the Spirit of Lenity, considering thy own self, lest thou also be tempted, Ib. 6. 1. Walk worthy of the Vocation in which you are called, with all Humility and Mildness, with Patience supporting one another in Charity, Eph. 4. 1. Put ye on, as the Elect of God, the Bowels of Mercy, Benignity, Humility, Moderation, Patience, supporting one another, and pardoning one another, as also our Lord hath pardoned you, Col. 3. 12. The Servant of our Lord must not wrangle, but be mild towards all Men, apt to teach, patient, with Modesty admonishing them that resist the Truth, 2 Tim. 2. 24. These Texts are so clear that they need no Explication. I beseech you then, you who read this Book, that you will deal mildly with your Servants; That all Bitterness, and Anger, and Indignation, and Clamour, and Blasphemy, with all Malice, be taken away from you, Eph. 4. 31. Tell not abroad your Servants Faults, but conceal their Weaknesses. Complain only to themselves, or to their best Friends. And by this means you will be sure to gain them, and

oblige them to be much more diligent in your Service.

C H A P. XII.

Of the Duties of Servants.

REMEMBER, you who are in a low Condition, that you are told by St. James, not to afflict your selves, but rejoyce : and by St. Paul ; *Let every one abide in the Vocation in which he was called : wast thou called being a Bond-man ? care not for it ; and if thou canst be made free, use it rather,* 1 Cor. 7. 21. Consider well the Advantages of Service. 1. You are no Slave, such as St. Paul speaks of : you are at liberty to hire your self for how long you please, the Masters you serve are Christians, you have Wages or other Recompenſe after a certain time. 2. You are free from all Care for your Subsistence, and a thousand other Concerns ; and you may easily perceive, by what passes in the House where you live, that the

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the Rich cannot boast of being happier than the Poor, and that Vexations and Crosses fall daily to their shares too. 3. You are, without Comparifon, better fed, better cloathed, and better treated in your Service, than you would be in your Father's House, where you'd not have less Work to do, nor less Obedience to pay, than you owe to your Master. There you'd see many Miseries, which here you know nothing of. The Service you do, is easy, and consists more in Care than in any Bodily Labour. How sweet is this in Comparifon of what many others go through, as Labourers; Sea-men, Porters, Soldiers, &c.

See then that you discharge all your Duties in the best manner you can. *Servants*, says St. Paul, *be obedient to your Lords, according to the Flesh, with Fear and Trembling, in the Simplicity of your Heart, as to Christ. Not serving to the Eye, as it were, pleasing Men, but as the Servants of Christ, doing the Will of God from the Heart, with a good Will, serving as to our Lord, and not to Men; knowing*

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that every one what Good soever he shall do, that shall he receive of our Lord, whether he be Bond or Free. And elsewhere he says, *Servants, obey in all things your Masters, knowing that you shall receive of our Lord the Reward of Inheritance: for he that doth Injury, shall receive that which he hath done unjustly: and there is not Exception of Persons with God, Col. 3. 22.* Again he says, *Whosoever are Servants under the Yoke, let them count their Masters worthy of all Honour, least the Name of our Lord and his Doctrine be blasphemed. But they that have faithful Masters, let them not contemn them, because they are Brethren, but serve the rather, because they are faithful and beloved, who are Partakers of the Benefit of his Redemption, 1 Tim. 6. 1, 2.* And elsewhere, *Let Servants be subject to their Masters, in all things pleasing, not gainsaying, not defrauding, but in all things shewing good Faith, that they may adorn the Doctrine of our Saviour, God in all things. Servants, says St. Peter, be subject to your Masters with all Fear, not only to the Good and Gentle, but also to the Froward. For this*

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is Thanks worthy, if a Man for Conscience towards God endure Grief, suffering wrongfully. For what Glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your Faults, you take it patiently? but if doing well you suffer patiently, this is acceptable with God, 1 Pet. 2. 18. These are the Rules the Holy Ghost has been pleased to prescribe to Servants, to give us to understand, that the Souls of mean Persons are no less precious with him than those of great Ones; and that he regards not at all the Conditions of Men, but their Virtues. From all these Texts may be gathered five Duties of a good Servant, viz. Respect, Obedience, Affection, Fidelity and Patience.

Respect is included in the Commandment which bids us Honour our Father and Mother: for under these two Names are comprehended all Heads of Families, Governors, and generally all Superiours, who to us hold the Place of Christ, and consequently may claim Honour and Respect from us as Christ himself, who told them, He that despiseth you, despiseth me, Luke 10. 16. As to Obedience,

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bedience, 'tis plain that no Body pretends to go to Service but with design to practise it. Whatsoever then a Master commands, that is not contrary to the Law of God, ought to be done readily and cheerfully : but if it is an ill thing he bids us do, or hinders us from doing a good and necessary Work, we are to remember that God is rather to be obeyed than Man. You ought not then to serve any that would engage you in Sin ; and young Women especially are bound immediately to quit their Service where their Modesty has been attempted, and where they cannot live without danger of offending God. Neither ought Servants to stay in Places where they are denied the Liberty of hearing Mass on Sundays and Holidays, and of going sometimes to the Sacraments. They ought not to live with Masters of a scandalous Life, of loose, wicked, Atheistical Principals. As soon as they perceive them to fall into any notorious Disorders, they ought, before the Infection seizes them, to quit their Places, and let them never fear but
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God will provide them better Masters.

Affection is the third Duty, and what can there be more just and reasonable than to shew it to those who have drawn us out of Necessity, and all the dreadful Consequences of it? A Servant then ought to take part in the Interests of his Master, to defend them with Moderation, serve him with Tenderneſs, look upon him as a Father, rather than a Master, endeavour to prevent his coming to any harm, give him diligent Attendance, prefer the Service he owes him before his own particular Devotions, and testify on all occasions a Zeal and Desire to content him. *Fidelity* is the fourth Duty, and the first in one Sense, that is to say, the chief. It is the Foundation of all Human Society, and especially of Domestick, which subsists only by the Trust and Confidence that a Father of a Family puts in his Wife, his Children, and Servants. Take away this Trust, and what will follow but Confusion, Rapine and Murther? which must render Human Life more miserable than

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than that of the most Savage Brutes. Wherefore it was that a Prophet, complaining of the extream Corruption of the *Jewish* People, said, *That there was none amongst them could trust his Friend or Relation, Jer. 9. and that every one found Enemies in his own House, Mich. 7.6.* This Fidelity consists in avoiding all manner of Thefts, whether great or small, in not taking any thing how inconsiderable soever that belongs to the Master, without his expresse Leave: *For he that is faithful in small things, will also be faithful in greater, Luke 16.10.* But above all, be aware of private Compensations, that is, of pretending to pay your self under the Notion of doing your self Justice. Here's a Servant, who thinking his Wages are too small, or that he really wants what is necessary for his Maintenance, takes every Day, unknown to his Master, some little part of the Money that passes through his Hands. Another Servant, because his Wages are not paid him, makes bold with some of his Master's Linnen or other Goods privately; to pay himself.

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Now, know that both the one and the other of these are guilty of Theft. If your Master refuses to pay you, you have the Course of Justice open for you, which altho' it be troublesome and grievous, yet the Law of God allows you not to pay your self. Those Masters indeed that expose their Servants to such a dangerous Temptation are guilty of a very great Crime. *Behold, says St. James, the Hire of the Work-men that have reaped your Fields, which is defrauded of you, cryeth; and their Cry hath entred into the Ears of the Lord of Sabbath,* ch. 5. 4.

The Faithfulness of a good Servant consists secondly in suffering nothing to be wasted or destroyed through his Fault, in taking the same care of his Master's Goods as of his own, and, if possible, rather more, for a Man may neglect his own Interest without harm to any one, but he ought not to neglect another's Concerns when he is entrusted with them. It consists, 3. In giving nothing away, not even to the Poor, without a particular Leave. 4. In never revealing

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ing the Secrets of the Family, in not discovering his Master's Faults, and in doing what in him lies to promote his Advantage. *Patience* is the last Duty of a Servant, who ought to be thoroughly perswaded that he shall meet with Troubles every where, that Suffering is the way to Heaven, that he can do nothing more agreeable to God, nor more proper for his own Sanctification, than to offer up to him all his Master's Humours and Passions. Nevertheless when he thinks himself too ill used in a Place, let him, after good Consideration and Advice, peaceably and quietly withdraw himself; but let him take heed that he be not too easily given to change. *Pass not from House to House*, says Christ to his Disciples, *Luke 20. 7.* And the same may be said in some respect to Servants. You shall find much the same Troubles, the same Inconveniences in all Houses. You shall have something to suffer every where. And consider that besides all the other Harms of changing often, Servants are apt to
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C H A P. XIII.

Of the Rules to be observed in choosing a State of Life.

NOne of us, says St. Paul, liveth to himself, and no Man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live to our Lord; or whether we die, we die to our Lord. Therefore whether we live, or whether we die, we are our Lords. For to this end Christ died and rose again, that he may have Domnion both of the Dead and of the Liveing Rom. 14. 7. You are not your own, for you are bought with a great Price, 1 Cor. 6. 20. You ought not now to live for your selves, but for him that died for you and rose again, 2 Cor. 5. 15. A Christian then, since he belongs to Christ, is not allowed to dispose of himself without first consulting him, and knowing what State of Life he has appointed for him. A Master has a Right to assign

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assign what Employment he thinks fit for his Slave to serve him in; and a Christian's Salvation consists in following the Vocation of God, because the Grace of his State depends on it, and goes along with it: inso-much that if we are but happy enough to take aright the Point of our Vocation, to learn what Gods Designs are towards us, and to enter into the way that he has allotted for us, we have nothing more to fear. For whoever does the Will of God, and follows his Orders, can not fail of Success in all his undertakings; such a one can never perish; and were he Embarked upon the most Tempestuous Sea, must needs be safe under the Conduct of an Almighty Hand, whilst another in a place seemingly more secure, which himself, not God, hath chosen, will most certainly be lost. He that walks out of the ways of God, cannot choose but go astray, and the more he seemsto advance, the farther he is of from the place he aims at.

Hence proceed those Bitternesses, Vexations, Discontents, and Trou-
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bles of Mind which torment much the greatest part of Mankind, and even of those who in appearance are the most happy. For could we but discover their inward Grievances, we should rather pity than envy them; they very often find Life a Burthen to them, and nothing more desirable than Death. The Reason is, because most of them are not in the State that God would have them: they enter into Marriage, into Commerce, and sometimes into Religion, and Church-Offices, meerly upon Human and Carnal Motives, through Vexation, Contradiction and Spight, which can never expect a Blessing from God. These Passions grow cool, and pass over, but the Difficulties of the State they have embraced pass not, they have given up their Liberty, and cannot bear the Yoke of Obedience; they have vowed Chastity, and have no Strength to keep it; they have promised to be Poor, and yet love Money; they have promised to love their Wives, and cannot endure them, they aim at Riches, and cannot compass them but by Lying,

Lying, Deceit and Robbery; and as they are perpetually exposed to these Temptations, they easily yield, and so Damn themselves for a little Gain.

Now, to the end, that you fall not under these sad Circumstances, observe the following Rules:

I.

You ought never to engage your self in a State of Life that is in it self criminal and damnable, such as teaching or learning the Magick Art, the Comedians Trade, that of Juglers and Buffoons, the keeping of Gaming-Houses, lending to Usury, making a Trade of corrupting Young Women, which are Employments and ways of Living forbidden not only by the Law of God, but also by the Civil Laws, and so wicked that you cannot engage in them without shaking Hands with your Salvation.

II.

There are other States of Life, which altho' they may not be so ill in themselves, yet nevertheless are extreemly dangerous, because they can hardly be followed without exposing you continually

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continually to fall into Sin ; such, for Example , is that of a Tavern or Ale-housekeeper, a Souldier, a Partisan, and such like Stations, where it is very difficult to observe the Law of God, and where Temptations are found so terrible, that Saints themselves would be hardly able to withstand them. Wherefore you ought not to undertake any of these Employments without a very great Necessity, nor of your self, without consulting your Confessor, or some other Pious and Learned Christian, to know whether it is God that calls you to it : for if so, you need fear nothing, but otherwise you cannot expect God's Blessing should attend you.

III.

Among the States of Life, which are permitted and approved, are these three : Marriage, Religion, and the Ecclesiastical State. The first and third, leaving us in the World, are not so secure and easy for Salvation as a Religious Life, which nevertheless is not exempt from its Dangers and Temptations : but finding

finding less there than in the World, makes Salvation more easily attainable in it, provided we choose a well-regulated Order. To know to which of these three States we are called, we must consult God, our Hearts, and Judicious Persons. The Grace of Discerning, is to be obtained by Prayer; our Heart will discover to us its Inclination, and when we have given an exact Account to some Judicious Person, of what God discovers to us in Prayer, and what our Heart inspires us with, he will help us greatly to take a good Resolution.

IV.

But as the State of Virginity, the Religious and Ecclesiastical State, are far more sublime than that of Marriage, so those that find themselves called to one of these three States, ought not inconsiderately, lightly, or rashly to engage themselves in it. They ought, as I have said, to pray, consult and examine themselves a long time before they take their last Resolution, and then let it be executed with the utmost Prudence and

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Precaution. Here it is that a good Director is very needful, and that no Book can give a satisfactory Answer to all you shall have to say, and to what passes in your Heart : altho' sometimes a Wise Father, a Discreet Mother, or a Friend full of the Spirit of God, shall be able to help you as much as a Director : for *the Spirit of God blows where he will.* Take care only not to proceed too fast. The faithful Soul, says St. *Augustine*, ought not to go before God, but follow him, not to be her own Guide, but to obey the Motions of the Holy Ghost. Perhaps it may be a long time before God will vouchsafe you an answer, but be not impatient: he is pleased thereby to try your Constancy, your Submission, your Fidelity : he has his own Times and Moments, and 'tis your Business to wait and expect them : Adore these delays and content your self with saying to him ; *I am ready, O God, I am ready to follow and to obey thee, Ps. 107.* I will neither turn to the right, nor to the left from the way that thou shalt appoint me.

V.

V.

You must not believe that your Inclination is an assured Mark of a Vocation from God, unless you have the Qualities requisite for the Employment you aspire to. Therefore, when you pray that God will discover to you the State of Life, to which he calls you, you ought to be in a Holy Indifference to embrace that which you shall believe he designs you for. Pray not to obtain that which in your Opinion is the best, but to know that which God would have you choose. On this depends the Happiness or Unhappiness of your Life. Celibacy is certainly preferable to Marriage, as the Eye is preferable to the Foot : but it is a Gift which all have not received. All the Members of the Body are not Eyes. God has made others less Noble, to which he hath assigned other Functions. 'Tis he hath placed them in the Body, and hath disposed them as he thought fit. When every Member performs its Function, nothing is more Beautiful and Harmonious, but when they act not according to the De-

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signs of Nature, nothing is so monstrous. The same thing holds of the Mystical Body of the Church, as of the Civil Body of the State. We are incapable of serving either the one or the other, unless the Employment we are in, be suitable to the Talents we have received from God. All are not proper for the same things, but God calls every one as he pleases, to that State of Life which is fittest for him, and provided we be attentive to his Voice, we shall not fail to hear it. I had much rather, says a Learned Father, see you Married, if God had called you to that State, than to see you a Religious Man without a Vocation : for we are taught in Scripture that God gives not to all the same Talents, nor in the same degree.

VI.

Sometimes God is pleased to declare his Will by extraordinary ways. *Saul* was called to the Crown from looking after his Father's Asses. *St. Paul* was called to the Apostleship as he was going to *Damascus* to persecute the Christians. Among the extraor-

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dinary ways may be comprehended Revelations prudently examined, sudden and unforeseen Accidents, as a violent Sickneſs, ſome great Confuſion, or ſome conſiderable Danger. But that the Reader may the more eaſily chooſe his State, in caſe he be not already engaged, or that he may the better diſcharge his Duty, in caſe he has made his Choice, I intend particularly to ſpeak of the Advantages and Duties of Marriage, Widowhood, and Virginity.

C H A P. XIV.

Of the Advantages and Excellence of Chriſtian Marriages.

I.

MArriage being of Divine Inſtitution, no Body can doubt but that it is good and *honourable in all*, as *St. Paul* ſays, *Heb. 13. 4.* After God had formed the firſt Woman of the Rib of the Man, he preſented her to him, to be his Wife, and bleſſing them,

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them, said, *Encrease and multiply, and replenish the Earth, and subdue it to your Power*, Gen. 1. 28. Thus *Adam* received *Eve* from the Hand of God, and to teach his Children how indissoluble the Bond of Marriage was to be, said, *A Man shall leave his Father and Mother, and shall cleave to his Wife, and they shall be two in one Flesh*, Ib. 2. 24. He afterwards continued to Honour Marriage, in appointing that of *Abraham*, of *Isaac*, of *Jacob*, of *Joseph*, of the Father of *Moses*, of *David*, of *Solomon*, and of many other Saints, to be Types and Figures of the greatest Mysteries of our Faith.

II.

Christ hath been pleased to honour it still more, 1. In vouchsafing himself to be Born of a Married Woman, altho' a perfect Virgin. 2. In being present at a Wedding, together with the Blessed Virgin and his Apostles. 3. In doing there his first Miracle, where he turned Water into Wine, to supply the Wants of new Married People.

III.

This Miracle prefigured a farther Honour he intended afterwards to Matrimony, in raising it to the Dignity of a Sacrament. This is the Name the Apostle gives it, where repeating the Words of *Adam* which relate to the indissoluble Tye of Marriage, he adds, *This is a great Sacrament, but I speak in Christ, and in the Church*, Eph. 5. 32. which is as if he had said, This Sacrament is great, because the end for which it was instituted is great, it being to represent to us that ineffable Union of the World incarnate with the Church: for the Word Incarnate descending from Heaven into this World, abandoned as it were his Eternal Father, by taking upon him in his Incarnation the Form of a Man; he abandoned also his Mother the Synagogue, and joined himself to the Church by so strict an Union, that no Power on Earth nor in Hell is able to break it. He first united himself in the Incarnation by the Hypostatical Union of the Word with Human Nature, whereby Christ became as one with
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his Church. Secondly, By the Vocation and Sanctification of his Church, which he promised never to forsake, but to remain with it to the Consummation of the World, and to render it invincible, so that *the Gates of Hell shall never prevail against it.* Mark 16. 18.

As Marriage then is the Figure of both these Divine Unions, it ought to be esteemed the more honourable, and its Tye more strict and firm. And these Figures not being empty and barren in the Law of Grace, as it was in the old Law, they produce in the Sacrament of Marriage that Grace which they represent, to the end that the Persons Married may imitate in their Lives the Purity and Holiness of Christ and his Church.

IV.

The Union of two Persons truly Christian, is certainly a very great Help to Salvation, and an extraordinary Support in the Evils of this Life. They may Pray together, Read good Books, assist at Divine Offices, exhort, comfort, animate, reprove

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and advertise each another; and what can be more sweet? Is not this the Happiness the Scripture promises to the Just Man? *Blessed is he that fears the Lord, and walks in his ways. Because thou shalt eat the Labours of thy Hands, blessed art thou, and it shall be well with thee. Thy Wife as a plentiful Vine in the sides of the House. Thy Children as young Plants of Olive-trees round about thy Table. Behold, so shall the Man be blessed that feareth our Lord, Psal. 127. He that hath found a good Wife, hath found a good thing, and hath received a good Pleasure of our Lord, Prov. 18. 22. Three things seem to me agreeable before God and Men, Union amongst Brothers, Love among Neighbours, a Husband and Wife perfectly agreeing, Ib. 30. 29. All the Advantages which the Scripture attributes to Union, Peace, and Charity, may be applied to suitable and well-contrived Marriages. A Husband and Wife strictly united by Love, may be said to be like an impenetrable Tower, nothing can alter their Union, nothing can render them unhappy;*

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py, they find in their mutual Friendship such an inexhaustible Stock of Comfort to sustain them in all Afflictions, that the most muddy Waters of Tribulation cannot extinguish that perfect Charity they have for each other, nor deprive them of that which is the most agreeable thing upon Earth, *viz.* a true Friend, into whose Breast they may pour all their Troubles and Grievances. *O how sweet and agreeable a thing it is,* says the Prophet, *for Brethren to dwell in Union!* Psal. 132. 1. But as all these Advantages are not to be met with but in Christian Marriages, let us see a little what those ought to do who have Thoughts of entering into this State; and then we will see how they ought to behave themselves in it.

C H A P. XV.

*Of the Dispositions necessary for
those who intend to Marry.*

THE first Disposition is, not to enter into that State but to do the Will of God: in order to which you ought to consult, (as I have said in speaking of Vocations in general) and endeavour to know whether God would have you Marry, for otherwise you are like to make but a very unhappy Match. *You may Marry whom you will*, St. Paul says, *provided it be in our Lord*, 1 Cor. 7. 39. Consider well of an Engagement which draws such Consequences after it. Let not Passion, but Reason, move you to it. If you are only pushed on by the impetuous Motions of Carnal Love, Repentance will soon overtake your Marriage. An Enterprize not wisely begun, seldom fails of a very unhappy Ending. Alas! how many do we daily see engage themselves in Marriage, without either Fear or Wit?

Wit? how many hurry on to an Action of so great Importance, without consulting any but their own Passions? how many are there who never think of inviting Christ to their Wedding, but fail not to bid the Devil a hearty Welcome? Can we wonder if such Marriages should produce untowardly and wicked Children, to provoke continually the Wrath of God upon them, and multiply his Judgments? To avoid this Misfortune, you ought most earnestly to beg of God that he will please to direct you in this Design, that you may find out the Person which he has appointed for you from the beginning of the World: for it appears in Scripture, that God determines to every one of those he calls to Matrimony, the Person he would give. *Eve* was formed for *Adam*, *Rebecca* was ordained for *Isaac*, *Sarah* for *Tobie*, and *Esther* for *Assuerus*. Now, if God took so much Care for those of the old Law, without doubt he is not less concerned for the Saints of the New: he is the same to day that he was yesterday, and ceases not to

manifest the Depth of his Wisdom in the Marriages of our Days. This made *Solomon* say, *That House and Riches are given of the Parents, but of our Lord properly a prudent Wife*, Prov. 19. 14. If then you are called to Marriage, consult not so much, in the Choice of a Wife, your own Fancy, your Inclination, your Passion, or that of your Parents, as the Will of God, for if you take not her whom his Providence has allotted for you, you will be miserable. Would you that your Marriage be made in the Lord, as *St. Paul* says, and that he preside in it? Choose not for your self a Wife, but pray that God will grant the same Favour to you as he did to *Adam*, and send you also a Meet-help like unto your self.

The second Disposition you ought to be in, is, not to Marry a Person that is out of the Communion of the Church, without very great Reasons: there is nothing more dangerous for your Salvation; for if a Man that is an Infidel be sometimes saved by the faithful Woman, it often falls out
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that the faithful Man is perverted by the Infidel Woman. The People of God were strictly forbidden to contract Alliances with the *Cananeans* and other Pagans of the Land of *Promise*, least they might be drawn by the Women to Worship their Idols, as it often happened among the *Jews*. The Church, for the same Reason, hath forbidden Christians to Marry with any out of its Communion; and it appears but by too many Examples, that such Marriages prove for the most part fatal, either for this World or the next.

You ought not to Marry your Kindred within the Degrees forbidden, unless very great Reasons oblige you to seek a Dispensation. It is commonly not the Spirit of God, but the Concupiscence of the Flesh, or Love of Riches, that makes these Marriages within the Degrees prohibited: besides, we seldom see God's Blessings attend them, but that they are either punished with Barrenness or some other worse Misfortunes.

The third thing a Man ought to do that is inclined to Marry, is to seek

a Woman near his own Rank and Condition, and suitable to his own Humor and Age. Such like Marriages may be said *to be in our Lord*, because the joining of Persons so agreeable in all respects, suits well with the Wisdom of God. A great Inequality in Birth or Fortune proves commonly the Ground of Contempt and Disdain one for the other, and the greatest Obstacle to that Union which ought to be maintained between two Persons that are always to live together. They ought to be both of the same Temper, because it rarely happens that People of a different Humor agree in the same Mind. God permits not such unsuitable Alliances, but for their Punishment, or Exercise of their Patience. Be careful then to find out a Woman of a rational, mild and tenderly Spirit, calling to mind this Saying of Scripture; *A brawling Woman is compared to the Droppings of a House in the Winter*, Prov. 27. 15. and this other; *A babling and noisy Woman is to a quiet and peaceable Man, what a Mountain of Sand is to an old Man climbing*

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climbing up it. Endeavour to get one about your own Age : for what Union of Hearts can there be expected from the Marriage of Persons so different in Years ? *Rejoyce*, says the Wise Man, *with the Woman of thy Youth*, Prov. 5. 18. In fine, seek out a Woman that has more Piety than Beauty, more Vertue than Money ; one that will apply her self to her Household Affairs, and loves her Work : for great Estates, are no more capable than Beauty, of rendring Marriages happy. Beauty and Riches are only by way of Addition ; but Piety and Labour are properly the Portion of those who are at God's Disposal. *The Holiness and Prudence of a Woman*, says the Wise Man, *much surpasseth the Beauty of the Face.* *A reasonable Woman is a rich Inheritance.* God will bestow her on him that feareth him, in Recompense of his good Works. *A good Grace*, says he, *is deceitful, and Beauty is vain.* *The Woman that feareth our Lord shall be praised*, Eccl. 26. 19.

C H A P. XVI.

Of the Obligations of Married Persons.

THEY may be divided into four sorts. The first regards God, The second the Persons Married. The third respects the Children. The fourth the Sacrament it self, which renders Generation Lawful and Christian.

I.

In regard of God, you ought to observe this Precept; *Fear God, and keep his Commandments, for this is every Man,* Eccl. 10. 13. That is to say, you ought to establish for the Foundation of your Happiness in this World and in the next, the Fear of God, his Love, and an inviolable Fidelity to keep his Commandments: so that you may be always disposed to loose all, rather than loose his Grace by any one Mortal Sin. Your Love for him ought to exceed all other Loves; you ought to be in a readiness to quit Fortune, Honour,

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Honour, Life, Father, Mother, Wife, Children, Friends, and in a word, all that's engaging upon Earth, for his sake.

This is the Foundation of all true Piety and Religion. From this Love proceeds Prayer, Assiduity at Divine Offices, Frequentation of the Sacraments, Charity for the Poor, exactness in performing all our Duties, and a Regular, Uniform, and Christian Life. A Man that truly loves God, has him often in his Thoughts, speaks to him, and of him, with pleasure, fears to offend him, and seeks all means to please him.

II.

As for the Married Couple, they are obliged to observe towards each other three things; a Mutual Love, an inviolable Fidelity, and great Meekness and Patience in bearing with each others Failings.

After God, a Husband ought to Love his Wife, and a Wife her Husband more than any other Person whatever. *Husbands*, says St. Paul, *love your Wives, as Christ hath loved the Church*, Eph. 5.25. Have a Tenderness,

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derness, Kindness and Complaisance for them : be both of one Heart, and of one Soul. Wives respect your Husbands: remember they are in your Family what the Head is in the Body. The Woman was taken from the Man, and was made for the Man. So that you ought to love, honour and obey them as your Superiors. But you Husbands, you are to remember that Man is born of a Woman, and that *Eve* was formed of the Rib of *Adam*, to teach you that your Wives are your Companions, and not your Slaves. In short, Love one another and then do what you please.

Conjugal Fidelity is well enough understood : every one knows in what it consists. 'Tis sufficient in this place to say, that Adultery is set forth in Scripture as one of the most heinous and provoking Crimes that can be committed. In the Old Law it was punished with Death in private Persons, and in Kings by most terrible Judgements, as we see in the Example of *David*, and in that of *Pharaoh*, for having taken into his
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Palace *Sarah* the Wife of *Abraham*; altho' he knew not that she was Married; and how *Abimelec* was threatned upon the same Account.

That Husbands and Wives ought to bear with one anothers Faults, their own Interests, as well as the Law of Christ, obliges them to it. It is by this Forbearance they must sweeten all the Troubles that are inseparable from Marriage. It is by this Meekness that Christian Wives get the better of their Husbands, how peevish and cholerick soever they be: by this *St. Monica* gained her's, who was of a most violent and passionate Temper.

III.

In regard of Children, who are the Blessing and End of Marriage, Parents ought to offer them up to God, so soon as they are formed, to get them Baptized soon after they are Born, to give them a Christian Education, to endeavour to lay up for them an honest Subsistence according to their Condition, and to remember that great Poverty proves a great Temptation for most People, and is
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apt to engage them in many Sins. Instruction, Correction, and good Example, are essential Duties in all Parents.

IV.

As to what respects the Sacrament of Marriage, which *St. Paul* calls a *great Sacrament in Christ, and in the Church*, They that receive it ought duly to consider two Qualities which they bear, and which they are obliged carefully to preserve. They are Men and Christians. As *Men*, they ought to guide themselves by Reason; as *Christians* they ought to hearken to the Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles. *Reason*, which distinguishes them from Beasts, forbids them to act like such who are only led by an Impetuous and Brutish Instinct. *Christianity*, which distinguishes them from Infidels, permits them not to imitate their Liberties and Dissolution. They are to love their Wives as Christ hath loved his Church. This is the Model set them by *St. Paul*. Now, the Love which Christ had for his Church was neither Human nor Carnal: he loved his Church that he might sanctifie it, and

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and render it without Blemish in his Eyes, after he had purified it in his Blood. It is of this Divine Love that Conjugal Affection is a Figure. The Union of Married Persons ought to tend to this Pitch of Holiness. That Marriage, where nothing of this is to be found, is but an empty Sign, without either Grace or Vertue. There is nothing so pure as that which expresses the Love of Christ for his Church. It implies a Concern for Salvation, a Holy Officioufness arising from Charity, a Husband's seeking and loving in his Wife, and a Wife in her Husband, that which Christ seeks and loves in his Church, and his Church in him. Imitate then your Divine Master, let Holiness be the thing you seek after in your Spouse : imitate the Church, and seek no other ways of pleasing your Husband but by Piety and true Zeal for your Salvation. Marriage is Honourable in all, says *St. Paul*, You ought then to make an honest Use of it, that the Nuptial Bed may be without Spot. *It is good for a Man*, says this Apostle, *not to touch a Woman ; but because of Fornication,*

Fornication let every Man have his own Wife, and every Woman have her own Husband. Let the Husband render his Debt to the Wife, and the Wife also in like manner to her Husband. Defraud not one another, except perhaps by consent for a time, that you may give your self to Prayer, and return again together, lest Satan tempt you for your Incontinence. But I say this by Indulgence, and not by Command, 1 Cor. 7.

1. By this Doctrine of the Apostle, we see there are times proper for Married Persons to separate by mutual Consent, to deprive themselves even of lawful Pleasure, to Practise Christian Mortification, in order to render their Prayers more pure and fervent, and to escape the Sentence pronounced by Christ against all that refuse to do Penance. These times according to the Spirit of the Church, are all Solemn Festivals, Fasting Days, and those Days they Communicate. Had not the first Man Sinned, Marriage had served only for the Generation of Children, whereas now it serves also as a Remedy against Incontinence: but since by the Wick-

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edness of Men, it oftentimes entertains the Evil instead of curing it; other Ways might be taken to chastise the Body, and bring it into Subjection.

Not to mention the Sins that may be, and are but too frequently committed against the Holiness of this Sacrament, I shall only take notice, that the two Sons of *Judas, Her,* and *Onan*, as well as the first seven Husbands of *Sarah*, mentioned in the Story of *Tobie*, were struck by the Angel of our Lord, for Faults which now-a-days are very common, and which few Christians make any scruple of: but God, who is a righteous Judge, will not fail to punish them, either here, or hereafter. *For this know ye,* says St. Paul, *that no unclean Person hath Inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God,* Eph. 5. 5. *The Will of God is, that you be holy and pure, and that every one may know how to possess his Vessel in Sanctification and Honour, and not in the Lust of Concupiscence, as the Gentiles, that know not God. Let none seduce you by vain Discourses, perswading you there is no Ill*
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in all these things ; for I have already told you, that our Lord is the Revenger of all such Sins, and that it is for such Dissolutions as these, the Wrath of God falls upon Men rebelling against the Truth, 1 Thes. 4. 4. &c. The Instruction which the Angel gave young Tobie before he durst venture to Marry Sarah, for fear of meeting with the same Fate as her seven former Husbands, plainly shews, that all is not innocent nor allowable in Marriage, as many Christians falsely imagin.

C H A P. XVII.

Of the Advantages of Widowhood, and the Duties belonging to that State.

ST. Paul distinguishes Widows into two sorts : the first he barely calls *Widows*, and the others he stiles *Widows indeed*. The first are such as care not to Marry again, because their first Marriage proved ill, or because they do not meet with a Man
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they like ; they are shy of a second Marriage, for fear of lessening their Fortune, or bringing a Step-Father amongst their Children. They love their Liberty, and like to live their own Mistresses, without any more Husbands to controul them. In a word, they are such as remaining Widdows only upon Carnal Views, lead a Worldly Life, and keep in those Flames which made St. *Paul* advise rather to Marry than Burn, 1 Cor. 7. 9. for the same Apostle that Preaches up Continence in Widows, when he says, *The Woman that hath lost her Husband shall be more happy, according to my counsel, if she remain a Widow*, 1 Cor. 7. 4. fails not to bid them Marry again, in case they find not in themselves a very strong and holy Inclination to Celibacy. *I would have*, says he, *the younger Widows to Marry, to bring forth Children, to be Housewives, and to give no occasion to the Adversaries to speak evil*, 1 Tim. 5. 14. He would not advise them to Vow Continence, because he saw many break their Vows, to the great scandal of the Church. *Avoid*, says he, *the younger Widows ;*
for

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for when they shall be wanton in Christ, they will Marry, having Damnation, because they have made void their first Faith, and some already are turned back after Satan. The Widow that lives in Delights, is dead, tho' she lives, Ib. 11. &c. The only Counsel for such Widows is, to Marry again, and to Pray for Grace to live piously and reservedly in that State. This is all I have to say to Widows that are not inclined to renounce the World, in order to devote themselves entirely to Christ.

Honour, says the Apostle, the Widows who are Widows indeed, and let them know their Duties that they may live without Blame. If a Widow hath Children, let her first learn to rule her own House, and give her Children a Holy and Christian Education; for this is acceptable before God. She that is a Widow indeed, and desolate, hopeth in God, and continueth in Prayers Night and Day. Every one is ready to give Testimony of her Piety, and to speak of her good Works, 1 Tim. 5. 4. Her Vertuous Children and Family bespeak the Care she has of them, and sufficiently

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sufficiently shew her not unmindful of what St. Paul sayes ; *That if any Man hath not Care of his own, and especially of his Domesticks, he hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel, ver. 8. She is careful then to breed up her Children. She Exercises Hospitality, she washes the Saints Feet, she affixts them that are in Tribulation, she follows every good Work, ver. 10.. She consecrates her Liberty to Christ, she makes it not serve her as an Occasion of Living, according to the Flesh, but to mortify it. She relishes with an unspeakable Satisfaction the Sweetness of her State. For my part, says St. Paul, I would have all Men be as my self ; but every one hath a proper Gift of God : but I say to the Unmarried and to Widows, it is good for them if they so abide even as I also ; but if they do not contain themselves, let them Marry ; for it is better to Marry than Burn, 1 Cor. 7. 7. He that is without a Wife is careful of the things that pertain to our Lord how he may please God. And the Woman Unmarried and the Virgin thinketh on the things that pertain our Lord, that she may be Holy*

both in Body and Mind. And this I speak to your Profit, not to cast a Snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that you may attend upon our Lord without Distraction, ver. 32. Such is the Happiness of a Widow. She enjoys the Priviledges of a second Continence, as St. *Jerome* expresses it: she now gives her whole Heart to God, which was before divided between the Creator and the Creature, between the immortal Spouse and her Husband: she who before had entertained her self Day and Night with a Man, speaks now Night and Day to God in the Fervency of Prayer: she takes for her Model *Judith* and *Ann* the Prophetess. How are the Praises of *Judith* set forth by the Holy Ghost? Is it barely that she Married not again? This indeed is what she is commended for; but then we are given to understand, that the Reason why she avoided second Mariage was the great Affection she had for Chastity: he Praises her for that she was full of the Fear of our Lord, and that her Conduct was so irreproachable, that Calumny its self durst not speak the least

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least Ill of her : he commends her for shutting her self up in close Retirement , and there passing her Life with her Daughters in Prayer and Working , for wearing a Hair Shirt upon her Loyns, and for Fasting every Day, except on the Sabbath, and other Festivals of the People of God.

They are very near the same things which St. *Luke* extolls in *Anne* the Prophetess. She was says he, *far advanced in Age, and had lived with her Husband seven Years from her Virginity ; And she was a Widow until eighty and four Years, who departed not from the Temple, but served God with Fastings and Prayer Night and Day, Luke 2. 36.* Here you have in few words the Duties of a Christian Widow ; Retirement, Prayer, Fasting, Working, and other good Deeds. Those Widows on whom God has bestowed a plentiful Fortune, may easily comply with these Duties, and it is what they are obliged to : they are exhorted by all the Saints to have a special care to preserve their Reputation clear and without Spot , in not
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allowing suspected Visits, nor Conversations, and in admitting no Men into their Families but who are in Years, and of known Vertue. ‘ A Woman’s Honour, says St. *Jerome*, ‘ is a nice thing; it is a most beautiful Flower, but the least blast may ‘ spoil it, and a Breath is enough to ‘ make it fade and wither, especially ‘ when a Widow is fair and young. ‘ Let her be never so rich, what has ‘ she to do with so many Officers, and ‘ such a Train of Foot-Men about her? ‘ Why cannot some grave sober Man ‘ be as proper to govern the House, to ‘ keep Order and Discipline among ‘ the Servants, and to preserve the ‘ Mistress’s Reputation? I have known ‘ some Widows, adds this Father, ‘ who, notwithstanding their retired ‘ way of Living, have not escaped ‘ Censure, for granting too much Freedom and Authority to some of their ‘ Servants. Their Sauciness has been ‘ interpreted the Lady’s Favour, ‘ and sometimes her secret Amour, ‘ which has extreamly lessened her ‘ Reputation. I tell you this, that ‘ you may set a Watch upon all your ‘ Actions,

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‘ Actions, and defie all that the
‘ blackest Malice can invent. Never
‘ let any Gentleman, or other Ser-
‘ vant, be seen about you, too Beau-
‘ tifully trim’d out; away with all such
‘ Effeminate Blades, who think only
‘ how to dress and preserve their Com-
‘ plexion. Suffer not Musicians to
‘ haunt you, who with their Devilish
‘ Airs are apt to poison the Soul.
‘ Keep Company with Widows and
‘ Virgins consecrated to God. Never
‘ seek Diversion but with those of your
‘ own Sex. The Mistress’s Manners
‘ are guessed at by the Behaviour of
‘ those about her. Let not your Ta-
‘ ble-talk be of Pheasants, Partridges,
‘ and such like costly Dainties: such
‘ Entertainment is only fit for the
‘ rich Glutton and such as he, who
‘ consume in good Cheer what Pro-
‘ vidence had designed for the Subsist-
‘ ance of the Poor. For you who
‘ ought to have buried all Delights in
‘ your Husbands Grave; you who
‘ have so often bathed your Cheeks
‘ with your Tears, you should never
‘ think more of Feasting your self, but
‘ of Fasting out your whole Life. A

' pale Face and neglected Dress,
 ' should be for you, instead of Pearls
 ' and Pretious Stones. Be not too nice
 ' and curious about your Bed ; let
 ' the Love of Chastity keep you from
 ' going to Baths, as well as all publick
 ' places. I had rather see your Sto-
 ' mach Sick than your Mind, your Bo-
 ' dy weak than your Chastity. All
 ' this I have said to shew you that
 ' you are like the rest of Mankind,
 ' and that if you look not well to
 ' your self, you will find your self
 ' engaged in the same Passions ; we
 ' are all formed of the same Clay,
 ' conceived in Sin and begotten in
 ' Iniquity. Concupiscence reigns e-
 ' very where, as well amongst Rags,
 ' as in Silks and Sattins ; and as it
 ' disdains not the Cabins of the Poor,
 ' neither doth it respect the Thrones
 ' of Princes.

' A Christian Unmarried Woman,
 ' says St. *Augustine*, should muster up
 ' all the Thoughts of her Mind, and
 ' all the Motions of her Heart, where-
 ' with she might endeavour to please
 ' a Husband, and reduce them to the
 ' only Intention of pleasing her Lord.
 ' Consider

‘ Consider who this Lord is that you
‘ ought to please, and whom you
‘ shall please the more, as you are
‘ less busied about Worldly Matters.
‘ Try to please him who hath dis-
‘ pleased the World, to the end that
‘ they who should be so happy to
‘ please him, might be delivered from
‘ the Corruption of the World. The
‘ Beauty that best pleases him, is
‘ quite within the Soul. This is that
‘ Beauty you ought to preserve. It
‘ is this Man hidden in the bottom
‘ of your Heart that you ought to a-
‘ dorn. This is what you ought to
‘ make your only Concern. Your
‘ Spouse neither loves Artifice nor
‘ Disguise. Truth never delights in
‘ Falshood. He it is that said, *I am*
‘ *the Way, the Truth and the Life.*
‘ Run to him through himself. ’Tis
‘ in him you shall find Grace to
‘ please him. You must live with
‘ him, in him, and by him. It is
‘ by a pure Love and most Holy
‘ Chastity that the Heart of this Di-
‘ vine Spouse is to be gained. But if
‘ you are desirous to remain in a Ho-
‘ ly and Chast Widowhood, see that

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' gross Earthly Pleasures be succeed-
 ' ed by Spiritual Delights, as are
 ' Reading, Prayer, Singing of Psalms,
 ' Pious Thoughts, the frequent Exer-
 ' cise of good Works, Hopes of the
 ' Life to come, a Heart always raised
 ' towards God, and attentive to his
 ' Presence, most humble and conti-
 ' nual Thanksgivings to the Father
 ' of Light, from whom descends eve-
 ' ry excellent Grace, and every per-
 ' fect Gift. The Widow that re-
 ' nouncing second Marriage, pre-
 ' tends to any other Delights than
 ' these, must be accounted in the
 ' Number of those whom *St. Paul*
 ' looks upon as *dead, altho' they seem*
 ' *to live*, 1 Tim. 5. 6.

' But above all, adds *St. Augustine*,
 ' I beseech God that you may not be
 ' drawn away with the Desire of
 ' Riches, nor that the Love of Gold
 ' and Silver may take up in your
 ' Heart the place of a Husband's Af-
 ' fection : for Experience hath shewn
 ' us some, who after having overcome
 ' their Carnal Passions, have fallen
 ' under that of Covetousness : and
 ' as it happens in the Senses of the
 ' Body,

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‘ Body, that the Hearing is quicker
‘ in those that are Blind ; so it often
‘ falls out that Concupiscence being
‘ repulsed on the side of Carnal Plea-
‘ sure, turns with greater Force upon
‘ the Desire of Gold and Silver ; and
‘ being resisted in one place, it at-
‘ tacks another with much more Vi-
‘ olence. Renounce then the Love
‘ of Riches, as well as Marriage ;
‘ make good Use of what you have,
‘ in order to lay up Treasures in Hea-
‘ ven. If you had an open Heart in
‘ your Husband’s time, take still a
‘ greater Delight in relieving the
‘ Necessities of the Poor ; for God
‘ receives not into his Heavenly Trea-
‘ sury Gifts offered by Vanity and
‘ Pride, but Alms given to the Poor,
‘ which have a wonderful Vertue in
‘ helping the Widows Prayers to
‘ raise her up to God. Add to this,
‘ Fastings and Watchings so far as
‘ you are able, with respect to your
‘ Health. For how hard and difficult
‘ soever these things seem to Nature,
‘ they soon become sweet, and we
‘ find therein an unspeakable Plea-
‘ sure, when we love God, and join

‘ to them Prayer, Singing of Psalms,
 ‘ Pious Lectures, and a continual
 ‘ Meditation of the Law of God.
 ‘ When once we love a thing, what-
 ‘ ever Pains we take to compass it,
 ‘ seem easy and pleasant. This ap-
 ‘ pears in those that love Hunting,
 ‘ Fishing, or any other laborious Ex-
 ‘ ercise. To Love then is our only
 ‘ Concern, and how to place our
 ‘ Affection right ; for whatever it be
 ‘ we fix upon, we shall be willing to
 ‘ have it at any Rate. And if it be
 ‘ thus, even in things of the World,
 ‘ can any thing be more shameful
 ‘ and deplorable, to find so much
 ‘ Pleasure in a Fatigue, when we
 ‘ undertake it for a Beast, or a Fish,
 ‘ and to find none at all, when it
 ‘ concerns the Possession of God him-
 ‘ self ?

C H A P. XVIII.

In Praise of Virginity.

AT length I'm come to treat of the
 most sublime and most perfect
 State

State of the Christian Religion. I am now to speak to those generous, brave Souls who trample under foot all the Vanities of the World, and all the Pleasures of the Flesh; to those Virgins, *St. Cyprian* who by all the Fathers are stiled the fairest Flowers in the Garden of the Church, the Honour of the Christian Religion, the Ornament of Grace, the most fervent and noble Troop among the Soldiers of Christ, the most perfect Workmanship of the Holy Ghost, and most worthy of the Respect and Admiration of Men, a faithful Imitation of the Purity of Angels, the most lively Image of the Holiness of God himself, and the most Illustrious part of Christ's Flock. I speak to those Virgins, who are, as *St. Cyprian* says, the Joy, Glory and Honour of the Church. She rejoyces to have such fine Children to present her Spouse withal. In them it is that her Fruitfulness appears in all its Splendor and Merit. Or rather let us say how much she admires the Kindness of her Spouse in forming within her Bowels such

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a great number of Virgins which render her so fair and pure in his Eyes : for a Gift so rare and pretious can come from none but

S. Fulgentius.

this Divine Saviour, who himself was the only Son of a Virgin, the only

Spouse of all Christian Virgins, the only Fruit of Holy Virginitie, the Present of Heaven, and the Glory of the Earth, brought forth by a Sacred Virgin, according to the Flesh, and espoused by all Holy Virgins, according to the Spirit, from whom Virginitie receives the Grace of remaining inviolable, the Ornaments which preserve its Beauty, and the Recompense wherewith it is Crowned in Heaven. ' Altho' we look upon Marriage as a Holy State, established by our Lord himself in the ' Terrestrial Paradise, and afterwards ' in the New Covenant advanced to ' the Dignity of a Sacrament; yet we ' pretend not to equal it, much less ' to prefer it to the Purity of a Virginal State. Christian Virginitie ' must be allowed to be far more excellent than the most Holy Marria-

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ges. We don't indeed compare
' Marriage with Virginity, as an E-
' vil with a Good, but as a small
' Good with a great One, as a low
' thing with a high, an Earthly thing
' with a Heavenly, a Carnal Happi-
' ness with a Spiritual Felicity, an
' Ordinary with an Heroick Vertue,
' as that which is barely pure with
' an Angelical Purity, a Mortal with
' an Immortal Marriage, the Flesh
' with the Spirit, Feebleness with
' Strength, Trouble with Rest, a State
' of Sorrow and Tribulation with a
' sweet and quiet Life, a Blessing
' mixt with Affliction and Grief, with
' another Blessing that produces no-
' thing but Joy and Comfort. We
' dare be bold to say, that the Union
' between Persons who Marry, even
' according to God, comes as far short
' of that Union which Holy Virgins
' contract with Jesus Christ, as a
' Life somewhat resembling the Life
' of Beasts comes short of a Life that
' imitates the Purity of Angels. For
' in Marriage the Mind is bowed to-
' wards the Earth, while in Virgini-
' ty the very Flesh, all Earthly as it
is

' is in its Nature, is raised towards
 ' Heaven. In Marriage the Obliga-
 ' tion of pleasing divides the Heart
 ' and Mind. In Virginity the Soul
 ' is only sollicitous about Heavenly
 ' things, how she may please her Di-
 ' vine Spouse. In Marriage the Plea-
 ' sure of Fruitfulness cannot be had
 ' without the Loss of Virginity, and
 ' it often falls out that she who ceases
 ' to be a Virgin, cannot thereupon
 ' become a Mother, but remaining
 ' Barren, can neither recover what
 ' she has lost, nor obtain the Fruit
 ' she hoped for from her Marriage.
 ' While by the Sacred Bond which
 ' joins a Christian Virgin with her
 ' Spouse Christ Jesus, she becomes so
 ' united to him, that her Purity still
 ' encreases, without diminishing in
 ' the least her Fruitfulness: for altho'
 ' she hath no such Children as come
 ' of Marriage, yet in lieu thereof her
 ' Heart daily produces a thousand
 ' Fruits of Grace and Immortality.

' It cannot be denied, says St. Au-
 ' gustine, but Marriage has its Bles-
 ' sings and its Advantages, which
 ' consist not meerly in getting Chil-
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'dren, but in getting them in the
' way that the Law of God allows,
' in Modesty, in Purity, and Conju-
' gal Society, in giving them a Pious
' Education, in observing an invio-
' lable Faithfulness to each other, and
' in never seeking a Divorce, which
' would be to overthrow the Mystery
' figured by this Union of the Man
' with the Woman. But all these
' things are no more than the Duties
' of Life, and of Human Society;
' while the Integrity of Virgins, and
' the Desire they have of renouncing
' all Carnal Commerce, by a Pious
' and Holy Continence, is nothing
' less than the Property of Angels,
' and a noble Design of imitating in
' Flesh, subject to Corruption, the eter-
' nal and incorruptible Purity of
' those blessed Spirits. It is to this
' pure and heavenly Virginity that
' the two greatest Blessings of Matri-
' mony, Fruitfulness and Conjugal
' Chastity, ought to give place.
' Fruitfulness depends not on the
' Will of the Married Person, nor is
' Conjugal Chastity a Blessing that
' lasts for ever. The first comes not
' under

' under the Power of Free Will, and
 ' the second is not to be found in
 ' Heaven : whilst the Purity of Vir-
 ' gins appears there in its full Beau-
 ' ty, Crowned, and seated upon a
 ' Throne. There the Virgins have
 ' a distinct place, as is remarkt in
 ' Scripture, where God promises to
 ' *give them in his House, and within*
 ' *the Inclosure of his Walls, a particular*
 ' *place, and much more honourable than*
 ' *that of his other Children, an eternal*
 ' *Name, which shall never be forgotten,*
 ' because they have voluntarily em-
 ' braced a continent Life. The
 ' Kingdom of Heaven shall be the
 ' Possession of all the Just that perse-
 ' vere to the end : for *then this cor-*
 ' *ruptible Body shall put on Incorrupti-*
 ' *on, and this mortal Body shall be*
 ' *cloathed with Immortality.* This will
 ' be the Reward of all the Blessed.
 ' But as among the Stars one differs
 ' from another in Brightness, so will
 ' it be in the Resurrection of the
 ' Dead. Virgins will have a distinct
 ' and more honourable Place and
 ' Rank than other Saints. Advance
 ' then more and more, you chaste
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Spouses of Christ, in the Love of
your Profession. Praise our Lord
with greater Sweetness and Plea-
sure, since your only Business upon
Earth, is, to think of none but him.
Hope in possessing him to enjoy a
much greater Happiness, since you
are more fervent, and more faith-
ful in his Service. Let your Love
for him be the greater, since you
make it your Study to please him.
Wait for him; he'll return ere long
to give you Admittance into his
Nuptial Chamber. Have your
Loyns ready girt, and burning
Lamps in your Hands. You shall
bring with you to the Nuptials of
the Lamp, a new Song, which you
shall sing upon your Harps, it shall
not be like that which is sung by all
the Inhabitants of the Earth, but
such as you only shall be able to
sing. The Virgin-Disciple gives us
a clear View of the Happiness of
Virgins, when he says, *I looked,*
and behold a Lamb stood upon Mount
Sion, and with him an hundred forty
four thousand having his Name and
the Name of his Father written on their
Foreheads.

'Foreheads. And I heard a Voice from
 'Heaven, as the Voice of many Waters,
 'and as the Voice of great Thunder:
 'and the Voice which I heard, was as
 'of Harpers harping upon their Harps.
 'And they sang as it were a new Song
 'before the Throne, and before the four
 'Beasts, and the Seniors, and no Man
 'could say the Song but those hundred
 'forty four thousand that were bought
 'from the Earth. These are they which
 'were not defiled with Women; for they
 'are Virgins. These follow the Lamb
 'whithersoever he goes, Apoc. 14. 1.
 'And where is it then, says St. Au-
 'gustine, speaking to the Virgins,
 'where is it that this Lamb goes,
 'since none but you can go along
 'with him? Whither goes this Hea-
 'venly Lamb? Into what Woods,
 'into what Meadows? I believe, for
 'my part, it is into some place where
 'they taste of unspeakable Delights.
 'Not the vain Joys, nor the false and
 'fading Pleasures of this World, nor
 'even the Delights which those shall
 'taste in Heaven who are not Vir-
 'gins. The Joy and Delights of the
 'Virgins of Christ shall be to rejoice
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‘ in Christ, with Christ, through
‘ Christ, and for Christ, and that in
‘ another manner than the rest of the
‘ Saints. These shall have their Joy
‘ too, but it will not be like yours:
‘ you shall follow the Lamb, because
‘ the Flesh of the Lamb is Virginal.
‘ The rest of the Faithful who have
‘ not this Vertue follow the Lamb,
‘ not wheresoever he goes, but so far
‘ as they can; that is to say, every
‘ where, except when he walks into
‘ the beauty and brightness of Vir-
‘ ginity.

‘ Twould be endless to set down
here all that this and the rest of the
Holy Fathers have said in Praise of
Virginitie. Let it suffice to know,
that they have called them the *An-
gels of the Earth*, and have lookt up-
on their State as the most holy and
most perfect in the Christian Religi-
on. Now let us see what Precauti-
ons ought to be taken before we en-
gage our selves in it.

CHAP.

C H A P. XIX.

Wherein is shewn that we ought not rashly to engage our selves by Vow in the State of perpetual Virginity.

AS this is an extraordinary high State, and very much exposed to the Envy of the Devil, a great Courage is required to enter into it, and an Heroick Vertue to persevere in it. Christ has enjoined it to none, he has only discovered the Excellence and Beauty of it, and proposed to his Disciples the Reward, leaving them at their free Choice, either to engage in it, or to Marry. *All, says he, are not capable of this Resolution, but they only to whom it is given, Mat. 19. 11. As concerning Virgins, says St. Paul, I have not a Commandment of our Lord; yet I give my Judgment as one that hath obtained Mercy of the Lord to be faithful. I think therefore it is good for a Man not to Marry. He that Marrieth, doth well, but he*
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that doth not Marry, doth better, 1 Cor. 7. 27. Hence it follows, that we ought not lightly nor easily to engage our selves in so difficult a State, and for which we have need of a particular Gift of God, but rather ought to take a long time of Tryal, to see whether we shall have Strength to sustain all the On-sets the Devil makes upon those that embrace this State of Life. Which of you, says the Gospel, *intending to build a Tower, doth not first sit down and compute the Charges that are necessary, whether he hath wherewithal to finish it? least, after that he hath laid the Foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that see it begin to mock him, saying, That this Man began to build, and he could not finish it, Luke 14. 28.*

When we are young, and have a Fit of Devotion upon us, we easily entertain Thoughts of entering into Religion, and vowing Continence, we flatter our selves, that we shall feel the same Fervour and the same Courage all our Lives. But alas! there is no such thing to be expected. We judge like Children, without Know-

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Knowledge, and without Experience; and as we grow up in Age and Strength of Judgement, we become sensible of our Error, when it is past all Remedy. The Church, 'tis true, approves of Vows made at Sixteen Years compleat; but she bids not any of her Children engage themselves at so tender an Age, when Wisdom has so small a share in their Resolutions: neither does she advise such early Engagements, but wishes that they who find themselves inclined to this State of Life, would examine well whether they are led by the Spirit of God, or the Heat of an untimely Devotion, whose Flame is as easily put out as kindled. *St. Paul* would not have young Widows received among those that had engaged themselves in the Service of the Church, *1 Tim. 5. 11.* He admitted none under Threescore, and would have the young Ones rather Marry again than engage themselves in a Life which he judged them not capable of. *St. Leo* the Pope ordered that the Veil should not be given to Virgins under the Age of Forty. The Civil

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Civil Law permits not Infants under the Power of Parents or Guardians to Marry without their Consent, before they come to the Age of Twenty Five, and declares all such Marriages void. All which makes it appear reasonable to proceed leisurely in an Affair which concerns the giving up our Liberty for ever, and to think on it more than once; for when the Word is pronounced, 'tis for ever, and a Remedy is hard to be found that is not worse than the Disease. God gave a Power in the old Law to Fathers to dissolve the Vows of their Children, when, having made them without their Leave, they opposed them so soon as they came to their Knowledge. The same Right he gave to Husbands, in regard of their Wives; and God exhorted his People to weigh well the Vows they were to make, because when once made, he demanded their Performance. *If thou wilt not promise, says he, thou shalt be without Sin: but that which is once gone out of thy Lips, thou shalt observe, Deut. 23. 22, 23. The unfaithful and foolish Promise, says Solomon,*

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Solomon, *displeaseth God, and much better is it not to Vow, than after a Vow not to perform the things promised. Discharge then faithfully whatsoever thou hast promised.*

We ought likewise to consult some Pious and Judicious Person, that we may do nothing of our own Heads in so important a Matter. This is what the Scripture recommends, in bidding us not to be Wise in our own Conceits. They who think themselves called to a Religious State, may observe the general Rules set down in the 13. Chap. to which I add, they ought to take a longer time to deliberate upon this Desire of entering into Religion, than upon the Resolution of living a Virgin out of a Cloister, because in Convents there are not wanting sometimes great Obstacles to Salvation. This is the Opinion of St. *Theresa*.

Nevertheless it must be granted, that a well-regulated Monastery is a place much more proper than the World to be saved in: there the Hindrances are fewer and easier to be overcome; there

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there many and more Powerful Helps are to be had.

'Tis a Mark of the true Church to have Religious Houses that inclose prudent Virgins, whose Lamps are full of Oil, which give no less Heat then Light. It is in these Holy Places that a Man may much better than in the World, adore God in Spirit and Truth, and that his Duties are better known and performed. There it is he may breathe a purer Air, and chastise the Flesh, in order to bring it under Obedience to the Spirit. There the false Goods of the World are despised, and nothing but Vertue is valued or sought after. Thither it is we ought to retire to for Shelter, from the Tempests we are exposed to on the Stormy Sea of this World. Happy is the Soul whom God leads by the Hand into one of these Sanctuaries, whom he has preserved amidst the General Corruption of all Christian States. It may be accounted an infallible Mark, that such a one is in the Happy Number of Christ's Elect.

C H A P. XX.

*Wherein are explained the Duties
of Virgins.*

Supposing you engaged by the Spirit of God in this Sublime State of Virginity, you are to preserve your self in it by these three Means, viz. Humility, Prayer, and Penance. Not but that there are other Vertues besides, and other Means very proper to produce the same Effect; but these three are what the Saints have particularly recommended.

St. *Augustine*, in his excellent Treatise of Virginity, proposes *Humility* as the most safe Guardian of this Vertue. He sums up all the Instructions and Examples he could find in Scripture, to perswade the Necessity of it. He brings, 1. Several places in Scripture where it is enjoyn'd us. 2. The Example of the *Centurion*. 3. That of the *Publican* and *Pharisee*, the one rejected for his Pride, the other justified for his Humility. 4. That
of

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of the *Cananean*. 5. Christs reproving his Apostles for disputing about place.

6. Our Saviour's own Example, who being equal to God, debased himself so far as to become like us.

7. The perpetual Danger we are in of falling from God, while we live in this Mortal State. 8. The Miserable

fall of so many Virgins, whose overthrow God permits in Punishment of their Pride? ' You then, says this

' Great Doctor, you then O piously ' chaste Souls, who have denied to the

' Desires of your Flesh the Liberty of ' Marriage, which was not forbidden

' you, who have exacted of your fee- ' ble and earthly Members a thing

' which partakes more of Heaven ' than Earth; I send not you to

' learn Humility of *Publicans* and ' Sinners, altho' it be true that they

' go before the Proud into the King- ' dom of Heaven. It is not to these,

' I say, that I direct you, because ' they who have been delivered from

' the Abyss of Impurity, are not fit to ' be proposed as Models for pure Vir-

' gins to imitate. It is to the King of ' Heaven that I recommend you; to

‘ him from whom all Mankind have
 ‘ received their Being, and who for
 ‘ the Salvation of Men, himself became
 ‘ Men; to him who is far more
 ‘ Beautiful than all the Children of
 ‘ Man, and who was willing to be
 ‘ despised and abused by those very
 ‘ Men, whom he designed to Redeem;
 ‘ to him who being the Sovereign
 ‘ Lord of Immortal Angels, did
 ‘ vouchsafe to become the Servant of
 ‘ Mortal Men. It was not his Ini-
 ‘ quity that humbled him, but his
 ‘ Charity. Go not to learn Humility
 ‘ of him, who, overloaded with Sins,
 ‘ durst not so much as lift up his eyes
 ‘ towards Heaven; but to him whose
 ‘ Excess of Charity brought him down
 ‘ from thence. Go not to her, who
 ‘ seeking for Pardon of her Crimes,
 ‘ bathed with her Tears her Saviour’s
 ‘ Feet, but to him that vouchsafed to
 ‘ wash the Feet of his Servants at the
 ‘ same time that he forgave them all
 ‘ their Sins. I’m very sensible of the
 ‘ great Merit of your Virginity, and
 ‘ therefore it is that I propose not to
 ‘ you the Example of the humble-
 ‘ *Publican*; but on the other Hand, I
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cannot but apprehend your falling
 into the Pride of the *Pharisee*, who
 boasted of his good Works; and there-
 fore I would have you hearken to
 him that tells you, *Learn of me who*
am meek and humble of Heart. Hear
 the Holy Ghost, who cries out to
 you *The greater you are, the more you*
ought to humble your self in every thing.
 Hear him that tells you by the Pro-
 phet *Isaiah*; upon whom doth my
 Spirit rest, unless upon him that is *humi-*
ble, and that with trembling heareth my
Word? by *Job*; *Is not the Life of*
Man a continual Temptation? by
 our Saviour himself; *The Charity of*
many shall grow cold, because their
Iniquities shall be multiplied: and by
 his Apostle; *Let him that stands*
take care that he fall not. But if all
 these Advertisements from God;
 and all these Dangers that surround
 us, are not sufficient to convince us
 how extreamly needful it is for us
 to be humble, let us cast our Eyes
 upon those terrible falls which hap-
 pen from time to time among Per-
 sons of both Sexes, who have em-
 braced Virginitie. Why do you

T. 3. think,

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' think, doth God mix them among
 ' you? is it not to the end that their
 ' Falls may serve to redouble our
 ' Fear, and suppress our Pride which
 ' is so much displeasing to God, that
 ' purely to confound it, the most
 ' High became himself the lowest?
 ' I dare maintain, says the same
 ' St. *Augustine*, in one of his Sermons,
 ' that Married persons truly humble,
 ' are more to be Esteem'd than Vir-
 ' gins or Widows that are proud.
 ' Will God, do you think, at the
 ' Day of Judgement, reproach the
 ' Devil with Fornication or Adulter-
 ' ry? No, for as he hath no Flesh,
 ' he is not capable of these Crimes:
 ' but his Pride was that which expel-
 ' led him Heaven and cast him into
 ' Hell. If you would preserve Hu-
 ' militiy, never look back upon the
 ' Good you do, unless it be to render
 ' Glory and Praise to him by whose
 ' Grace you did it; see what is want-
 ' ing in you; forget what is behind
 ' you, and pursue that which is before
 ' you. You have Miseries that de-
 ' base you below your Brethren, al-
 ' tho' Virginitie raise you above them;
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‘ let your Eyes be open to your Mis-
‘ ries, but wink at your Vertues.
‘ Let the Prospect of your Wants
‘ draw Sighs from you ; dwell not
‘ on the Thoughts of any thing that
‘ may puff you up, because Pride of-
‘ ten meets with a Fall. And I dare
‘ say it might not be unprofitable for
‘ some proud Virgins to fall into Im-
‘ purity, that thereby they might be
‘ humbled in the very thing they va-
‘ lued themselves upon. What doth
‘ living Chast signify while we nour-
‘ ish Pride, which sullies the Soul e-
‘ very whit as much as Impurity does
‘ the Body ? Is it such a mighty mat-
‘ ter to renounce Marriage, which
‘ serves to propagate Mankind, while
‘ we are puffed up with the same Va-
‘ nity which overthrew the Devils ?
‘ Thus we see Humility is absolutely
‘ necessary for all Virgins who desire
‘ to be beloved of their Spouse Christ
‘ Jesus.

This Vertue produces Fear and
Distrust, and Distrust makes us Love
and seek Retirement, where Purity
finds the greatest Safety. *St. Ambrose*
remarks, that the Blessed Virgin was

shut up all alone in her Chamber when the Angel brought her the News that she was to be the Mother of God. He observes likewise, that she was troubled when she heard the Angels Voice. Whence he draws this Instruction, that Virgins ought to avoid the Conversation of Men, that they ought to hide themselves, and tremble at the very Sight and Voice of a Man, altho' he were as pure as an Angel. I think this Advice so necessary for Virgins, that I had much rather have them always be retired and shut up in their Cells, than employed abroad, even about Works of Charity: not that I pretend to condemn any that are thus employed, since many very Holy Communities do practise it so profitably to themselves and their Neighbours: but generally speaking, I say, that young Women consecrated to God, ought to remain a long time in the Employment of *Mary*, before they take upon them the dissipating Offices of *Martha*, which are better performed by Widows and Virgins of riper Years. This was the Practise of the Church

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in the Primitive Times, when none were received as *Diaconesses*, but Widows and Virgins advanced in Years, that no occasion might be given to the Infidels, of suspecting or speaking Ill of them, and to give time for the younger Plants of the Church to spring up and grow strong. I have already said, and it cannot be said too much, that the Liberty which both Sexes have of seeing each other, is the cause of many Scandals. If you have a mind to avoid them, keep your self concealed, instruct your self in good Books, consult your Lord and Saviour, live in Retirement, and by little and little, you shall bring your self to have very seldom occasion to talk with Men.

And what can you have to do in this Retreat, but to busy your self about the things of our Lord, to Pray, Sigh, Weep and pour forth your Heart before God? Is not this the proper Business and Employment of a Virgin? Is it not for this she renounced Marriage? Did she not desire to avoid that part in the Condition of a Married Life, which would

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have obliged her to think on the things of this World? Let her hearken to our Lord; *Martha Martha*, says he, *thou art carefull and art troubled, about many things, but one thing is necessary, Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken away from her*, Luke 10. 41. because she hath begun to do that on Earth which she shall Eternally do in Heaven; that is, be wholly employed about her Spouse. She thinks of none but him; she speaks of none but him; she loves none but him; she adores him, blesses him, sings his Praises, contemplates his Divine Perfections; and all this she makes her Joy, her only Quiet and Happiness. Thus she Prays always, according to the Gospel, *without being weary*, Luke 18. 1. She enjoys the Happiness mentioned by the Royal Prophet, when he says, *Blessed, O Lord, are all they that dwell in thy House. But what shall they do there? They shall praise thee*, adds the Prophet, *for ever and ever*. So that their whole Life shall be one continued Praise of God, and one eternal *Allclajia*. Behold
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says St. *Augustine*, the Employment we shall have in Heaven ; and no other shall we have for all Eternity : we shall see God ; we shall love him ; we shall praise him. And such, I say, is the Office and Employment of a Virgin consecrated to Christ, only with this Difference, that the Praises she gives to God, are mixed with Groans, Sighs and Tears. As she sees but through the Veil of Faith, as she loves but imperfectly, as she has no Security but in Hope, she joins Prayer with Praise, Tears with Joy, and Fear with Hope : but all this she refers to God, and makes it her whole Employment, so far as the Weight of this Mortal Body, and the Necessities of this Miserable Life will permit.

The third thing Virgins ought to practise, is *Penance*. I shall not repeat what hath been already said on this Subject in the first part of this Book. I will only add, That Penance, which is a thing so necessary for all Christians in general, is no less so for Virgins in particular, because they have consecrated them-

selve

selves to God as Victims, to be immolated to his Glory. It is to them much more than to the rest of the Faithful, that the Apostle says, *I beseech you by the Mercy of God that you exhibit your Bodies a living Host, Holy, pleasing God, your reasonable Service,* Rom. 12. 1. They are Virgins that say by the Mouth of the Royal Prophet; *For thee are we mortified all the Day long, they look upon us,* and we look upon our selves, *as Sheep prepared for the Slaughter,* Psal. 43. 24. and of St. Paul; *We bear always about in our Body the Mortification of Jesus, that the Life also of Jesus may be manifested in our Bodies,* 2 Cor. 4. 10. Every Victim ought to be immolated to God, and this is done either by suffering a violent Death in Defence of the Faith, or by a continual Mortification. Now, Virgins who cannot pretend to this first sort of Martyrdom, may obtain the second, which depends on their Zeal for Christ. They cannot always be dispatched by the Hands of the Executioner, but they may Sacrifice themselves with their own Hands, by

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arming them with such innocent Scourges as the Love of Pennance hath invented to punish, or prevent the Rebellions of the Flesh. The first of these Martyrdoms is the most cruel, but the second is the most irksome by its Duration. They are both highly valuable in the Sight of God, and Means of delivering us from the Pains of Hell, which the Impenitent cannot escape. *Every Victim, says Christ, shall be salted with Salt, Mark 9. 49.* either with the Salt of God's Wrath, or the Salt of Pennance. Is it not better to procure for our Body a glorious Immortality, in delivering it by the Rigours of Pennance from the Weight of its Corruption, than to render it miserably Immortal by the Fire of God's Wrath in the next Life? As the Flesh never ceases to resist the Spirit, so ought it incessantly to be mortified. A Virgin ought to imitate St. Paul, and be able to say with him, *I so run, not as it were at an uncertain thing; I so fight, not as it were beating the Air; but I chastise my Body, and bring it into Servitude, lest perhaps, while I Preach to others,*

others, my self become reprobate, 1 Cor. 9. 26.

'Tis true, the Fathers have all recommended Discretion in the Practise of Corporal Austerities, and would not have Health destroyed. A Virgin, says St. *Basil*, ought daily to struggle against the Intemperance of the Mouth, and never to quit till she has got the better. She ought carefully to suppress all that may any ways favour the Rebellion of the Flesh: for if she gives way to indulge the Taste, she ought to fear least this base Passion stir up another still more shameful, and deprive her of the Treasure of Purity, which she carries in a Vessel of Earth. The Taste of a Spouse of *Jesus Christ*, ought to be Virgin, as well as her self, and ought not to be corrupted by enticing Bits that flatter the Appetite. But while she is studious to suppress Sensuality in her Diet, she must be aware of falling into the other Extremity, that is, into too great an Abstinence: for there is no less Harm in rendering the Body unserviceable by

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‘ excessive Fasting, than in over-feed-
‘ ing it by Intemperance. When
‘ the Body is too nicely fed, it kicks
‘ like a pampered Horse against the
‘ Spur, and if it be deprived of its
‘ necessary Food, it is no longer able
‘ to stir. When the Body fares too
‘ well, it oppresses the Soul, and hin-
‘ ders its Application to Spiritual
‘ things : and when too long an Ab-
‘ stinence has reduced it to a weak,
‘ dry and languid Condition, it loos-
‘ eth its Vivacity of Spirit, its Vigour
‘ is abated, and all sublime Thoughts
‘ stifled.

A just Mean ought to be observed ;
’tis fit we should nourish our Body,
because we have need of it, and mor-
tify it, because ’tis rebellious ; let us
seek its Health, because without it
we are incapable of performing ma-
ny Duties ; and let us cut off from it
all Pleasure, because it serves only
to corrupt it. We ought to be aware
of that immoderate Zeal which puts
many upon undertaking such Morti-
fications as God never requires, and
which in a little time renders them
incapable of performing the most or-
dinary

dinary ones. They'll fare hard for a while, and fast beyond what the Church appoints; and afterwards are forced to indulge their Stomachs all the rest of their Lives, and be dispensed from Fasts which the weakest of Christians fear not to undergo. Let us not all at once run our selves out of Breath, but remember that *fair and softly goes far*. I shall conclude my Instructions to Virgins with these Words of St. Paul; *Corporal Exercise is profitable to little, but Piety is profitable to all things, having Promise of the Life that now is, and of that to come, 1 Tim. 4. 8.*

C H A P. XXI.

That all true Christians ought to pass their Life in Tears, and in a continual Mourning.

AFTER having spoken of the principal Duties belonging to the different States and Conditions of Men, I have thought fit to conclude this

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Work with a Duty, to which all Christians of what State soever are indispensably obliged. I speak of the Tears and Groans which always fill the Hearts of the true Children of God. And thereupon I shall do two things; first, I will bring the Authorities and Reasons which oblige us to Mourn in this Life, and next I shall explain what it is we ought to Mourn for.

Christ hath sufficiently declared to us the Necessity of Mourning, when he not only placed it among the Evangelical Beatitudes, but denounced Woe to the Rich, to such as have their Comfort in this World, and to those that Laugh, that is, who think only how to divert and enjoy themselves. We need but reflect a little on the Maxims left us by our Saviour in his Gospel, to be convinced that a Christian's Life is not a Life of Joy and Pleasure, but of Bitterness and Sorrow. To know how narrow the Gate is, and strait the Way, through which none can pass without the greatest Labour and Efforts, and what a continual Violence is necessary

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sary for obtaining the Kingdom of Heaven, let us but reflect on the Cross we ought always to carry, on the Self-denial and universal Disengagement required of us; the Holy Hatred we ought to have for every thing that may separate us from God; the Disposition of Heart we ought to be in of quitting all for Christ; that Penance, without which we shall all perish; the Obligation we are under of Dying to Sin, to the World, and to our selves, of crucifying our Flesh, of mortifying its Desires, of making War against our Inclinations, of resisting the Law of Sin which resides in our Body, and of destroying the Old Man with all his Concupiscences. Now, all these Precepts must needs engage us in a Life so hard, so painful and disagreeable, that *we are the most miserable of all Men*, as St. Paul says, *if in this Life only we be hoping in Christ*, 1 Cor. 15. 19. For all this cannot be done without great Violence and much Suffering, which consist not at all with great Joy. Thus we see in the Separation Christ made.

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made of his Disciples from those of the World, he assigns Joy for these, and Tears for those. *Amen, Amen, I say to you, that you shall weep and lament, but the World shall rejoyce,* John 16. 20. It is then an indispensable Duty for all true Christians to lament and esteem themselves miserable in this World. And this it was made St. *Augustine* say, 'That he who finds himself well at his Ease upon Earth, who would be glad always to remain here, and sets up here his Rest and Satisfaction, shall never find entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven; we sigh, says he, after the Heavenly Jerusalem, looking upon our selves here as Strangers and Prisoners, under the weight and slavery of a Mortal Body, and respiting our Joy till we arrive in our own Country; but he that Mourns not as a Stranger upon Earth, shall have no part in the Joys of Heaven, because the desire of a Blessed Life is not in him; he shall have no share in the Felicity of the next Life, because he thinks not himself miserable in this: on the contrary,

' contrary, he thinks himself very
 ' happy here in the enjoyment of Sen-
 ' sual Pleasures, and in the possession
 ' of Temporal Goods; such a Man as
 ' this, says St. *Augustin*, is a Raven,
 ' and not a Dove; the Raven going
 ' out of the Ark cared not to return
 ' back, because she fell upon dead
 ' Carcasses, which she met with up-
 ' on the Earth, while the Dove, see-
 ' ing nothing whereon to set her foot,
 ' found no where a resting place but
 ' in the Ark; the Dove is a Mourn-
 ' ing Bird, and teaches the Children
 ' of God that they must never cleave
 ' to the Earth, but always be tend-
 ' ing towards Heaven.

But if you demand why God con-
 demns those Christians that don't
 Mourn, St. *Augustine* will answer
 you, ' That 'tis because they have no
 ' Love for God; and of this there
 ' needs no other Proof than that they
 ' sigh not: for not to sigh, as a
 ' Stranger, and not to love God, are
 ' two things inseparable, says this
 ' Great Saint. He that loves not
 ' God, sighs not after Eternal Life;
 ' and he that sighs not after Eternal
 ' Life,

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Life, loves not God ; and this is
sufficient to be damned. Hence
he concludes, that this Life is a
continual Affliction to good Peo-
ple. If you look upon your self as
a Stranger here, either you have
little Affection for your own Coun-
try, or you must be troubled : for
who would not be afflicted not to
be with him he desires ? How comes
it then that you resent not this Af-
fliction ? It is because you want
Love. Love the next Life, and you
shall be sure to find Bitterness in
this, how much soever it may flat-
ter you with Prosperity and De-
lights. Enter then into your self,
examine your Heart, and see what
Answer it makes you. If God should
promise you a long Life upon Earth,
and should tell you, You shall pos-
sess here every thing that can make
you happy ; Riches, Pleasures, Ho-
nours, Health, Prosperity, and all
Earthly Blessings shall be poured
down upon you in abundance ; but
withal you shall never see my Face,
you shall never partake of the Bles-
sings of my House : would you be
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content to embrace this Offer? Whoever should be in this Disposition, has not yet begun to love God. The Just Man then ought to lament, and think himself miserable upon Earth; he ought to weep, and be able to say with David, *From the Voice of my Groaning, my Bones have cleaved to my Flesh, Psal. 101. 6. For I did eat Ashes as Bread, and mingled my Drink with Weeping. I am full of Sorrow, and am humbled exceedingly: I roared from the Groanings of my Heart, ver. 10. My Tears are Bread to me Day and Night, while my Enemies insult me daily, saying, Where is thy God? Psal. 41. 4. How long, says he, wilt thou feed us with the Bread of Tears, and give us Drink with Tears in Measure? Psal. 79. 6. Blessed is he that putteth his whole Trust in thee, who hath no greater Desire than to go to thee, who walking in this Vale of Tears, sigheth after thee in his Heart, and passeth thus his sorrowful Life in this place of Exile which thou hast appointed, Psal. 83. 7.*

We ought not to wonder that God deals in this manner with his Servants, since he treated no better his
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only Son. This Divine Saviour is called a *Man of Pains*, and not a *Man of Pleasures*, *Isa. 53.* It is said of him, that *he knew how to suffer*, and not that he knew how to divert himself. His Weeping is mentioned in the Gospel, but not a Syllable of his Laughing. No, he led a sorrowful and penitent Life, to confirm his Doctrine by his Actions. All that are his Disciples, ought to imitate him. We are invited to it even by Irrational Creatures : We know, says St. Paul, that every Creature groaneth for that it is made subject to *Vanity*, not willing, but for him that made it subject in *Hope*, because the Creature also it self shall be delivered from the *Servitude of Corruption*, into the *Liberty of the Glory of the Children of God.* It groaneth and travaileth expecting the *Day of the Manifestation of the Sons of God.* And not only it, but we also our selves having the first *Fruits of the Spirit* ; we also groan within our selves, expecting the *Adoption of the Sons of God*, the *Redemption of our Body*, *Rom. 8. 22.* And as if it had been asked of him why he groaned, he adds, *For by Hope*

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Hope we are saved ; but Hope that is seen, is not Hope ; for that which a Man seeth, wherefore doth he hope it ? but if we hope for that which we see not, we expect by Patience. This is what makes us groan : and because we cannot groan as we ought, the Spirit himself requesteth for us with Groanings unspeakable. And he that searcheth the Hearts, knows that what the Spirit desireth is according to the Designs of God, ver. 26, 27. who leaves us not on Earth, but that we may here groan, and, oppressed with Sorrow, cry out, Unhappy Wretch that I am ! who will deliver me from this Body of Death ? Rom. 7. 24. Let us now see what we have to Mourn for.

C H A P. XXII.

That the Faithful have great Reason to Mourn, in Consideration of the Miseries of this Life, and of their Separation and Distance from God.

THE Author of the 136 Psalm, where the Jews so dismally set forth

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forth the Miseries of their Captivity in *Babylon*, hath given us a lively Image of the State wherein the true Children of God find themselves upon Earth. The first Verse of this Psalm contains the two principal Reasons for their Tears and Complaints.

Upon the Rivers of Babylon, says the Prophet, there we sate, and wept, while we remembred Sion. The Jews wept, first, that they were Captives in Babylon; secondly, that they were at so great a distance from Jerusalem, which was continually in their Thoughts. The same two Reasons draw Tears from the Just in this Life. They weep for being confined upon the Earth, of which Babylon was the Figure. They weep every time they think of the Heavenly City, where they hope one Day to find Entrance, and of which Jerusalem was the Image. They weep because they are Captives in the World, and obliged to live with Men full of nothing but the Spirit of the World. For in this Life the Good are mixed with the Bad; and as these make always the
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greater Number, this World is compared to *Babylon*, because the Wicked commonly make the strongest Party, and the Good are not able to do what they would, but are forced to see an Infinity of things that displease them. So far are they from gaining the Inhabitants of *Babylon* to Christ, that they find it Trouble enough to support themselves in the Paths of the Gospel. There are two things then that afflict them in the World ; The first includes all the Disorders they are Witnesses of in *Babylon*, without being able to redress them ; and the Loss of such an infinite Number of Souls that perish before their Eyes. The second is, the Danger they are in of being lost themselves, and of being drawn into these Rivers of *Babylon* where certain Shipwreck follows. This is what the Prophet means, when says ; *Sitting on the Banks of the River of Babylon, we fell a weeping.* The Jews upon their coming to *Babylon*, gave themselves up to Tears, because they saw nothing there but Abominations, Idols, Superstitions , impious Sacrifices, the

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the Devil adored, the true God not known, or blasphemed, abominable Leudness, cruel Actions, a barbarous, insolent and wicked People. Those amongst them that feared God, had their very Souls rent with Grief, to see that Men made after the Image of God, should have less Understanding than Beasts, and with greater Brutality give themselves up to their infamous Desires.

The Just that live in the World suffer the same Persecution. Seeing themselves upon the Banks of the Rivers of *Babylon*, they cannot forbear weeping. These Rivers of *Babylon* are the pernicious Maxims which the World has introduced to destroy the Maxims of the Gospel. It is Custom which St. *Augustine* calls a River, and a Torrent that sweeps along with it the greatest part of Mankind, in a thousand things which no longer pass for Sins, when supported by its Authority. Such are the ill Examples and Discourses of the Men of the World, which are perpetual Temptations to the Children of God, inviting them to go
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along with them upon those cursed Rivers of *Babylon*. Such are all the Concupiscences of Carnal Men which engage them in a thousand Crimes and Abominations. Such are all those Disorders deplored by the Wise Man as Vanities, which destroy the greatest part of Mankind. One Embarks upon the Rivers of *Babylon* in the Vessel of Ambition, another in that of Avarice, another in that of Curiosity, another in that of Pleasure. All the Objects of these Passions, says St. *Augustine*, are rapid Rivers, which nothing stops, but bear all away, and loose themselves in the Abyss of Gods Wrath.

Now, who can see so many Shipwrecks, and the Loss of so many Souls whom God had created for their Eternal Happiness, and for whom Christ had spilt every Drop of his Blood? I say who can see them lost without shedding a Tear? Shou'd we not be made of Iron or Brass, to see with a dry Eye all the Evils that are committed upon the Earth? When I consider, says the Wise Man, the Oppressions that are done under the Sun,
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and the Tears of the Innocent, who have no Comforter, and that they cannot resist their Violences, being destitute of all Mens Help : I esteem the Dead happier than the Living ; and happier than both have I judged him that is not yet born, Eccl. 4. 2. &c. Who can without Weeping reflect upon what David said of his Time, and what holds yet truer of ours ; Hardly is there to be found upon Earth a Man that hath Understanding, and that seeketh God. They have all declined from the right way, they are altogether become unprofitable, there are none that do Good, no not one. Their Throat is an open Sepulcher, they deal deceitfully with their Tongues, the Poison of Adders lyes under their Lips : their Mouth is full of Malediction and Bitterness, their Feet are swift to shed Blood. Destruction and Misery are in their ways, and the way of Peace they have not known, nor is the Fear of God before their Eyes, Psal. 13. 3. There is no Truth, says the Prophet Ozeas, there is no mercy, there is no knowledge of God in the Land. Every Brother layeth Snares for his Brother, and a

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Friend :

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*Friend is not to be found without Ar-
ifice and Disguise.*

Truth is not to be heard; Lying and Falsehood give Laws, the Good are oppressed, the Wicked triumph, Merit goes unrewarded, all is carried by Favour, every one thinks of himself, and is negligent of others, the Use that is made of Riches, is abominable, the Poor are cruelly abandoned; in a word, look throughout the World, and you shall discover nothing but Evils and Objects of Misery on all sides. Is not all this enough to afflict a good Christian, and to make him wish for Death as *Elias* did. *He desired, says the Scripture, for his Soul to Die, and said; It sufficeth, Lord, take my Soul, for I am not better than my Fathers. With Zeal have I been Zealous for our Lord the God of Hosts, because the Children of Israel have forsaken thy Covenant; thy Altars they have destroyed, and thy Prophets they have Slain with the Sword, and I alone am left, and they seek my Life to take it away, 3 Kings 19. 4.*

But there is yet another Trouble that afflicts the Good, and more
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nearly concerns them: it is the Prospect they have of their own Danger while they are on the Banks of the Rivers of *Babylon*. These Rivers may overflow and swallow them up with the rest. There is nothing so easie as to imitate the Children of this World, and to commit Sin, when Custom and a multitude of Examples have taken away the Horrour of it. An extraordinary Temptation, an unforeseen Occasion, the Discourses we daily hear, and our own Complaisance, are but too apt to draw us on to these Rivers. *Who knows whether he is worthy of Love or Hatred?* Eccl. 9. 1. Who can tell whether he walks in the narrow Way of Christ, or in the broad way of Self-love? Every thing leads us to Pleasure, to Grandeur and Riches. The very Bent of our Soul goes always to perishable Goods. The Devil pushes us on, and the World presents them to us. 'Tis the Business of this World to appear glorious in our Eyes, in order to soften and abate our Courage; it sets it self forth in all its Charms, and spares no Caresses,
U 4 Hopes,

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Hopes, Promises, nor any thing that may flatter and seduce. And our Heart instead of defending it self, holds Intelligence with our Enemies, betrays it self, delivers it self up to Pleasure, and does what it can to corrupt and destroy it self.

Thus seduced and poisoned with the Love of the false Goods of *Babylon*, it fears the Christian Life, courts the Joys of this World, and shuns the Tears of Penance. The Body to compleat the Conquest, joyns with it, and resists the Spirit, renders the Soul dull and heavy, revolts against Reason, pursues Pleasure, hearkens to the Law of Sin, opposes the Law of God, hinders us from practising the Good we know, and draws us in to commit the Evil we condemn. *The Law is Spiritual*, says St. Paul, *and I am Carnal*, The Law requires, that the Soul be free from the Dominion of the Passions, *and I am as it were sold under Sin*. The Law requires that the Heart be good, *and I know that there dwelleth not in my Flesh any thing good*. *I have sometimes a Will to do good, but I find not the Means to accomplish*

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complish it. I feel in my Body a Law repugning the Law of my Mind, and captivating me under the Law of Sin. Unhappy Man that I am ! who will deliver me from the Body of this Death ? Rom. 7. 14. &c. When I consider the Prayers I make, I find them so weak, so languid, so imperfect, that I'm afraid they rather provoke than pacifie Almighty God. My *Mind* is crouded with Distractions, and my *Heart* dryer than a Skin exposed to the hardest Frost. I am neither Master of the one, nor the other. The one is subject to extravagant Thoughts, the other tossed with Motions that give me Horror. And all this is what I cannot help. To be forced to live with such a multitude of Enemies within one, and to be daily at strife with them, without being able to get rid of them, is to me the greatest of Miseries ; for my part, I'd choose as soon to live with Tygers, or any other the most Savage Beasts.

In fine, the last Affliction of the Just, is to see themselves so far from *Sion*, to be separated from their God, and not to be in the Heavenly *Jerusalem*,

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salem ; were they possessed of all the Riches of the Earth, they would think themselves miserable, because their Treasure is in Heaven. They look upon Heaven as their Country, and the Earth as the place of their Banishment. They are as Children at a great distance from their Father, Brides deprived of the Presence of their Bridgrooms, Princes driven out of their Kingdom, their Love burns them up, makes them languish and pine. *As the Hart*, says the Royal Prophet, *desireth the Fountains of Waters*, so doth my Soul thirst after thee, O God. My Soul hath thirsted after God, a living Fountain ; when shall I come and appear before the Face of my God ? Psal. 41. 1. &c Behold the only Object of my Desires, I shall never be satisfied, I shall never be filled, until thy glory hath appeared and communicated it self to my Heart, Ps. 16. 17. One thing I have asked of our Lord, this will I require ; that I may dwell in the House of our Lord all the days of my Life, Ps. 26. 7. This is what the Children of Men do hope for under the shadow of thy Wings : They
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wait the happy Day when they shall be filled with the Plenty of thy House, and when thou shalt give them to drink of the Torrent of thy Delights: because with thee is the Fountain of Life, Ps. 35. 8.

9. And all we possess here below, is no more than one small drop which thou hast left to support us in the Tedioufness of our Pilgrimage. *Alas! how is my Pilgrimage prolonged? How long have I dwelt with the Inhabitants of Cedar, and upon the Banks of the Rivers of Babylon, Ps. 119. 5. and we know, says St. Paul, that if this House of Earth wherein we dwell come to be dissolved, we have a Building of God, a House not made with Hand eternal in Heaven, 1 Cor. 5. 1. &c.* For we have here no permanent City, but are in Pursuit of that wherein we hope one Day to dwell; we are in quest of a City built on a firm Foundation, whereof God himself is the Founder and Architect. We live, like the Saints of the Old Testament, according to Faith, not having received the Promises, but beholding them afar off, saluting them, and confessing that we are Pilgrims and Strangers upon the Earth, and in Search

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of our own Country. This it is that makes us Sigh with the desire of being invested with the Glory of this Heavenly House. For while we are in this Body, as in a Tent, we groan under its Weight; because while we dwell in this Body, we are far distant from our Lord, and as it were out of our own Country; we walk towards him by Faith, but enjoy him not yet by a clear Vision: This happy Enjoyment is what we wish for, and are ready to go out of the Mansion of this Body, provided we go with our Lord, Heb. II. 13. Unto me, says the Apostle, to live is Christ, and to die is Gain, having a Desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, a thing much better. Phil. I. 21.

All the Children of God have the same Sentiments, they beg every Day of God, with all their Heart, the coming of his Kingdom. The Desire of Eternity is always in their Hearts. Sion is ever fresh in their Memory. What ever Business they are engaged in, they still find time to think of the Heavenly Jerusalem, they say with the Psalmist, *If ever I be forgetful of thee, O Jerusalem, let my Right Hand*
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be forgotten ; Let my Tongue cleave to my Jaws, if I be not mindful of thee ; if I propose not Jerusalem as the principal Object of my Joy, Ps. 136. ver 6.

I could not finish this Work better than by shewing the Necessity of desiring Heaven without ceasing, which ought to be the End and Design of all Works of Piety. This Desire is a daily Exercise for us. By this means we Pray without Intermission, and preserve the Presence of God amidst the various Employments of this Life which are apt to dissipate and divert us from that Object which ought always to be our only End and Aim. It is this Desire we regain new Fervour, nourish our Love, augment our Courage, and are excited to mend our pace towards a blessed Eternity. ‘ When the Scripture commands us, says St. Augustine, to Pray without ceasing ; it doth not oblige us to be always upon our Knees, nor to be Day and Night Singing Psalms, but to have always in the bottom of our Heart a Desire to quit Earth for Heaven. To Pray without ceasing, is, to desire
‘ fire

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' fire without ceasing the Possession of
 ' God. Our Heart ought never to
 ' be without this Desire. We ought
 ' to be always groaning, always sigh-
 ' ing, always saying ; I am a poor
 ' Captive, a Stranger ; this World is
 ' none of my Country ; I am not
 ' with my God. Not but that a just
 ' Person, adds St. *Augustine*, doth and
 ' may sometimes laugh and divert
 ' himself ; not but that he concerns
 ' himself about many things which
 ' seem very different from gaining the
 ' Kingdom of Heaven : alas ! this is
 ' what makes one of the Slaveries of
 ' his hard Captivity. He must la-
 ' bour for the *Egyptians*, he must make
 ' both Brick and Mortar, so long as
 ' he is *Pharaoh's* Slave. But still in
 ' the midst of his Captivity, he for-
 ' gets not the *Land of Promise*, he
 ' thinks of *Sion*, he sighs after his own
 ' Country ; and thus he Prays with-
 ' out ceasing : he ceases not to Pray
 ' while he ceaseth not to Desire, and
 ' as his Desire is continual, his Pray-
 ' er is so too. To Pray, is to ask
 ' with unspeakable Groanings the
 ' Divine Adoption, which is, as St.

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‘ *Paul says, the Deliverance and Re-*
‘ *demption of our Body, Rom. 8. 23.*
‘ It is to have a Holy Hunger and
‘ Thirst for the good things of our
‘ Lord’s House. It is to look upon
‘ ones self in the Desert of this World
‘ as in a strange Land: it is to pant
‘ with an ardent Thirst after that
‘ Fountain of our Eternal Country.
‘ To Pray, is to Love; and we cease
‘ to Pray when we cease to Love. It
‘ is asking of God this only Blessing,
‘ which can suffice the Children of
‘ God. It is saying truly and from
‘ ones Heart, All that is not God, is
‘ not capable of filling the vast Ex-
‘ tent of my Desires; let him take all
‘ away from me, provided he gives
‘ me himself; with him I am fully
‘ content, without him I find no-
‘ thing within me nor without me,
‘ but a dreadful Poverty and Want.

I beg of him with all my Heart,
that he will vouchsafe to pour down
his Blessing upon this small Work,
that it may be profitable to some of
his Children. I beseech him to open
the Hearts of those that shall read it,
that they may receive all his Instru-
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ctions which I have here set down, not *as the Word of a Man*, but as drawn from *the Word of God*, 1 Thes. 2. 12. May he not suffer me to be like a Channel of Stone, which while it conveys Water for the Nourishment of Flowers and Fruits, it self remains always Stone, always hard, always barren. May he not permit that while I am labouring to build the Ark for the Security of all the Elect, I my self perish in the Deluge. That after having sung the Songs of *Sion*, I be no more than a Willow on the Rivers of *Babylon*. That after having Preached to others, I my self become Reprobate, I hope all that shall profit by this Book, will readily join their Prayers with mine, for the obtaining a Deliverance from all these Evils. This is what I most heartily entreat of them; and I shall not fail on my part to put up the same Wilhes and Prayers for them.

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